

UNDER PRESSURE  
HOW TO BEAT THE  
EXAM BLUES

EDUCATION -

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## THE INDEPENDENT

Thursday 28 May 1998 45p (IR50p) No 3,622

Heads rebel  
against drive  
for standardsBy Ben Russell  
Education Correspondent

HEAD teachers threatened a rebellion against government targets for raising standards in the 3Rs yesterday, warning they would refuse to set "unrealistic" goals.

The National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) warned that schools would not co-operate with national targets "plucked out of the air" to meet political aims.

The move threatens to undermine a central plank of the Government's drive to raise standards in schools.

Ministers want 80 per cent of 11-year-olds to reach expected standards in English and 75 per cent to hit certain levels of maths by 2002.

Just over 60 per cent achieve the required level in national curriculum tests. David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education, has promised to resign if the targets are not met.

But headteachers meeting in Eastbourne accused the Government of selecting arbitrary and unrealistic goals for local authorities.

David Hart, the NAHT general secretary, pledged to take court action if local authorities imposed targets on schools against their will.

He said: "It would be helpful if there was agreement but if agreement can't be reached the schools position must prevail. Just because the Government wants to reverse established practice in target setting it does not mean we have to roll over and say they have got it right."

Delegates unanimously passed motions attacking the

Government for imposing targets and called for schools to be free to set their own goals.

Brian McNutt, head teacher of Eastway Primary School in The Wirral, warned that the emphasis on exam targets could make schools "educational sweat shops". He said: "It's a surreal world if children's best performance is met with exam tables and public shame.

"To achieve the targets will schools be turned into exam factories, just simple factual machines to get us through the tests? If we are going to improve standards the Government needs to work with us, rather than impose national targets."

Mr Hart said: "I will jump for joy if we hit the targets, but if we can't it could be due to a whole range of factors. The Government is bravely treading in very difficult waters. Target setting is not an exact science."

Chris McDonnell, head of Fulfen Primary School in Burntwood, Staffordshire, said targets did not reflect a school's full role. He said: "Schools are not factories. Knowledge is not a commodity to be sold. They are people places."

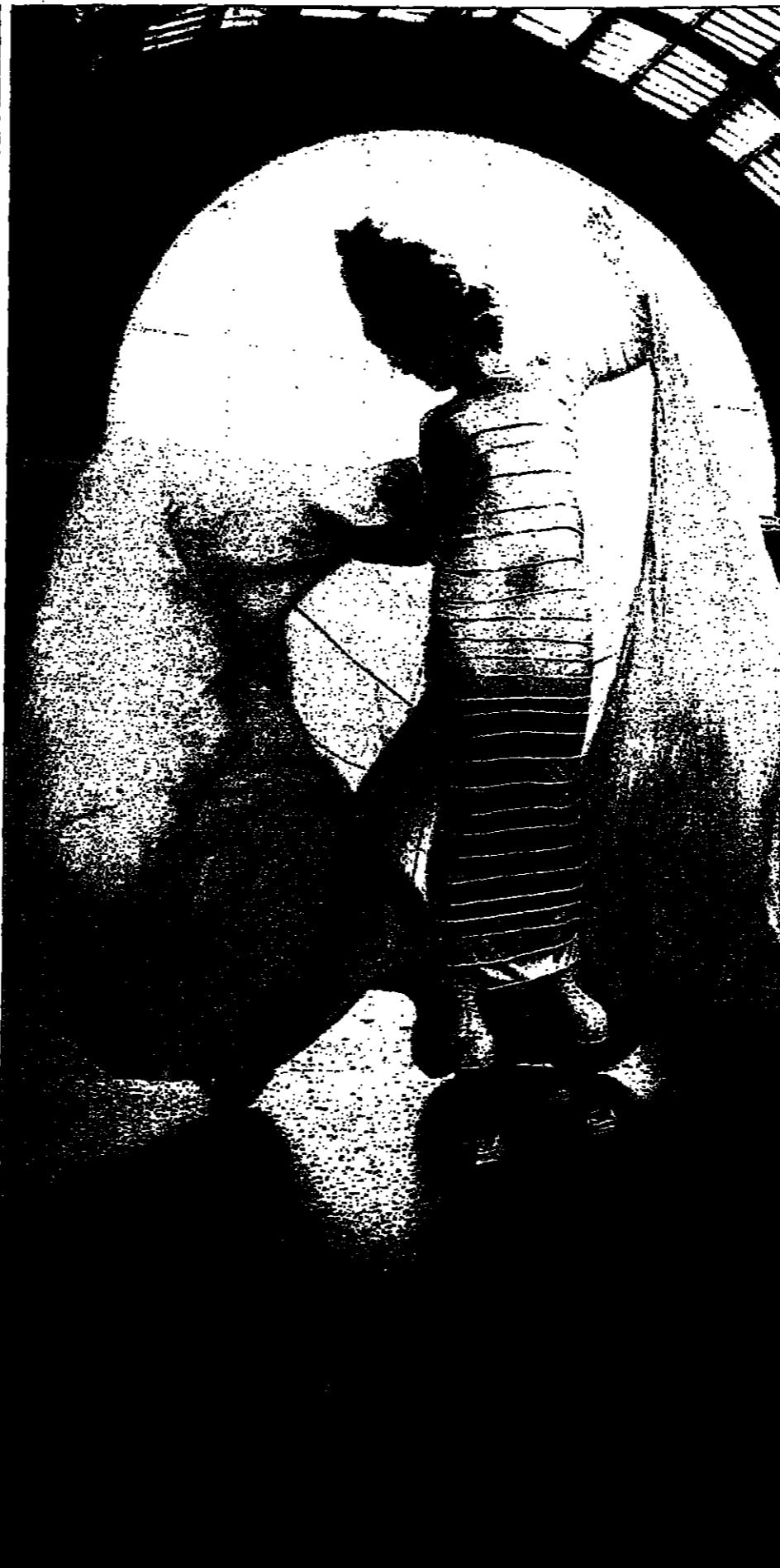
Graham Lane, education chairman of the Local Government Association, said: "If a school and a local education authority cannot agree on a target we will publish both targets and see which is right. The Government's targets for 2002 are very generalised. Some education authorities won't meet them then we will have to work out what happens."

■ The headteachers demanded a change in the law to limit the powers of "school governors from hell". They asked for governors to be given compulsory training and appealed for legislation setting strict boundaries on their role.

The conference heard the case of a governor who had stood in a school car park

timing when teachers came and went.

National executive member Mick Brookes won rapturous ap-



Emma Tebbit, a member of Seven Sisters Group, takes the platform at King's Cross station, north London. Further events are planned for Waterloo. Photograph: Nicola Kurz

## Fiasco over Lawrence arrest

By Kathy Marks

THE senior detective who led the Stephen Lawrence murder investigation admitted yesterday that until very recently he did not understand the legal grounds on which police officers can arrest suspects.

Former detective superintendent Brian Weeden, who retired in 1994 after 30 years in the force, told the public inquiry into Stephen's death that he had believed that hard evidence was required before arrests could be made. It was only after taking legal advice earlier

this year while preparing a statement for the public inquiry, he said, that it became clear to him that reasonable grounds for suspicion were sufficient.

The inquiry has heard that the five white youths alleged to have stabbed Stephen in a racist attack in Eltham, south-east London, in 1993 were named by numerous informants in the first 48 hours. But they were not arrested for at least a fortnight and attempts to prosecute them were unsuccessful.

Mr Weeden, who led the murder investigation for 14 months, said yesterday that his strategy had been to wait for evidence before moving in. "I had never before in any murder case arrested anyone without evidence, as opposed to information," he said.

Michael Mansfield QC, counsel for the Lawrence family, pointed out that he had given a different explanation when interviewed by Kent police officers from the Police Complaints Authority last year.

"You maintained, and you only recently shifted, that not only did you want evidence, you did not have the power to arrest until you had evidence. That

was the legal position as you saw it," he said. "That's perfectly true," Mr Weeden replied.

Mr Mansfield asked: "Do you not find it rather disturbing that it has taken all this time for you to recognise a fairly basic tenet of criminal law?"

"I think it's regrettable," he replied.

Mr Weeden denied that when he finally decided to make arrests, it was in response to "extreme pressures" such as a high-profile meeting in London the previous day between the Lawrences and President Nelson Mandela.

The inquiry continues today.

## Iraq demands war compensation from Britain

By Ian Burrell  
Home Affairs Correspondent

IRAQ is demanding compensation from Britain over damage allegedly caused by depleted uranium shells in the Gulf War.

The Iraqi Foreign Minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sabah, has sent a complaint to the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, accusing Britain and the United States of

"exposing vast areas of Iraq to fatal radioactive pollution".

The complaint followed the release of what Mr al-Sabah described as a "new and additional admission" by the Foreign Office on 30 April in an official statement that "British tanks used depleted uranium (DU) shells during the Gulf War on

orders from the British Ministry of Defence".

Mr al-Sabah told Mr Annan:

"A number of diseases, unfamiliar in the past, have been registered, such as foetal and bone deformities and other cases that cannot be explained.

Individuals living in the bombed areas suffer from such diseases, in addition to rising cases of child leukaemia."

Yesterday, the Labour back-

DU had harmful effects. The letter stated: "DU has the potential to cause adverse health effects if ingested, inhaled (for example, from DU dust in the vicinity of a target...) or absorbed...". Britain admits to firing fewer than 100 DU shells in the 1991 conflict but says US troops fired considerably more.

A Ministry of Defence spokesman said: "The UK has never attempted to conceal its use of depleted uranium ammunition in the Gulf."

Poisonous legacy, page 13

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Recycled paper made up  
41.4% of the raw material for  
UK newspapers in the  
first half of 1997.

Northern Ireland agreement: Parties focus on assembly elections as young are helped to look to the future

# Splits open among Ulster Unionists

By David McKittrick  
Ireland Correspondent

ARMS de-commissioning and the divisions in the Ulster Unionist party surfaced in Northern Ireland yesterday, as all sides positioned themselves for assembly elections next month.

Those speaking for loyalist paramilitary groups made it clear, in much the same terms as republicans have already done, that the authorities are likely to wait in vain for any decommissioning of weaponry.

Legislation passed in Parliament last year provided immunity from prosecution to people handing over weapons to the security forces.

Since no such handover

is then it would clear the way for progress."

Francis Molloy, a Sinn Fein councillor, said it was unlikely the IRA would hand over any guns or explosives, adding: "The IRA haven't been defeated and unless you have the defeat of one organisation over the other or one government over another then you don't have a surrender of weapons."

Unionist party members do

not regard the war against the Good Friday agreement to be over in political terms.

On de-commissioning, leader of the Ulster Democratic party, which is linked to the paramilitary Ulster Defence Association, had what was described as a constructive meeting with John de Chastelain, the Canadian general who heads the international body on decommissioning.

Gary McMichael, the UDP leader, said: "It would be ambitious to expect loyalist paramilitaries to give up their weapons before the IRA has said it is prepared to give up arms."

Mr McMichael said the meeting had been constructive and another would be held soon.

This is all part of the ongoing process. We have always taken a responsible attitude on this issue, but people should not expect loyalists to decommission while the IRA remain fully armed and have not even declared the end of the conflict," he said.

"We would like the IRA to declare the war is over. If they

do then it would clear the way for progress."

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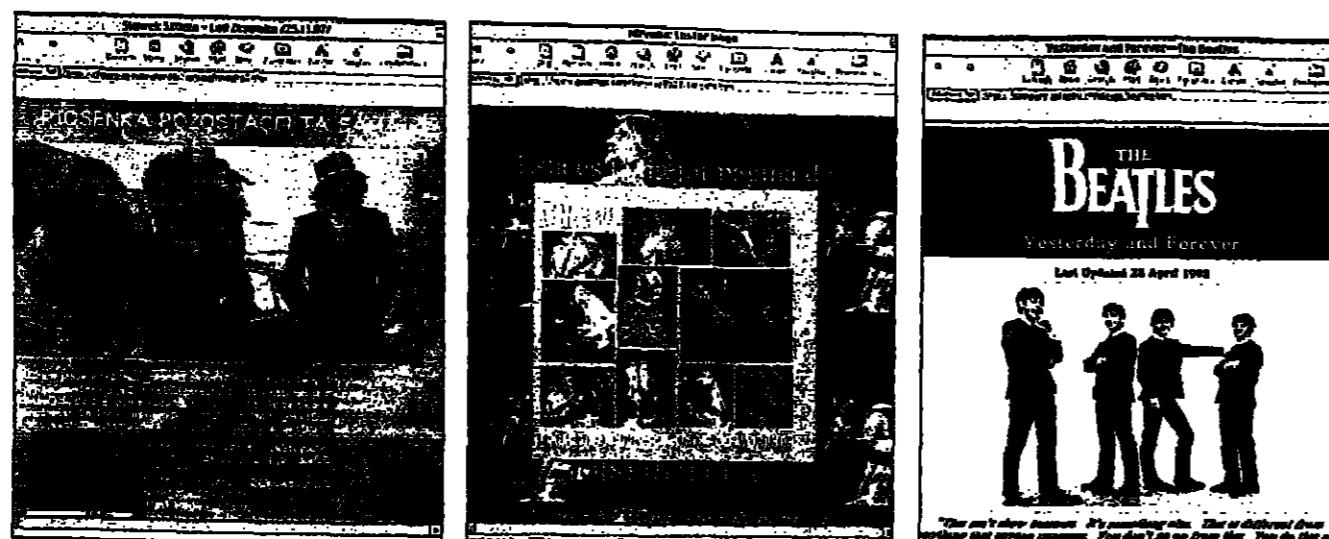
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## A new CD costs £14.49. Or, you could download it for free on the Internet. No wonder the music business is sounding off

By Paul McCann  
Media Editor

ROCK STARS and record companies lined up to complain yesterday that fans downloading free music from the Internet is costing them millions and could kill off the British music industry.

Launching a new lobby group, British Musical Rights, record company bosses blamed the telecoms industry for undermining its business and called on the Government to set up a task-force to strengthen international copyright agreements.

Beatles producer Sir George Martin and Ashley Slater of the band Freakpower gathered with record company executives be-

cause of the threat to their income posed by fans placing CD-quality recordings on the Internet. Anyone with the right technology can download their music and keep it for free.

Slater, whose band had a number one hit with "Tune In Turn On Cop", said: "If my copyright isn't protected we go out - a little twinkly light in the Cool Britannia sign goes out - and I'm just one of tens of thousands of musicians who rely on that."

"It's virtually impossible to earn money through touring. After four years we still owe our record company £350,000."

William Booth of Sony Music said: "My company invests millions of pounds each year in new writing talent and new composers and to recover that

money we need to be paid. If we don't get paid because it goes on the Internet we can't continue to make that investment in new talent and we can't continue to pay people to collect money for those new composers."

Internet service providers and telecommunication companies which carried the electronic messages should share some responsibility, he said.

At the heart of the industry's worries is a new digital software

- freely available on the Internet - known as MP3 or MPEG, which can take as little as three minutes to download a song in perfect digital CD quality from a web site.

Most MP3 sites are created by fans in their bedrooms happy to share their rare tracks and

bootleg versions. MP3 aficionados trade songs and whole CDs - if you don't bring something to trade it is known as "leeching". Nevertheless, MP3 versions of CDs get left on the web for anyone to download.

And it only takes one Internet address for a CD of a popular band to become well-known and thousands of copies can be made and thousands of potential sales lost.

In America the record industry, led by David Geffen of Geffen music, has clamped down on MP3 sites, using copyright legislation to close as many as 250. However, the British record industry was told yesterday that as many as 26,000 sites exist on the World Wide Web.

bands with the largest numbers of free music sites devoted to them tend to be guitar bands like Metallica and Nirvana which has 3,462 MP3 sites compared to Bob Dylan's paltry 546.

The problem for the authorities is that once closed down fans can set up a new web site or they can disappear into the myriad so-called "chat rooms" and discussion zones of the Internet where they can exchange their music without being traced.

"It can feel quite seedy," says Internet journalist Simon Waldman. "You chat for a bit and then ask them if they have anything to swap. They usually have Pearl Jam or another American band, either that or you get directed to an address for a site in Poland where you can get a free Spice Girls CD."

The overwhelming numbers

of young American men using the Internet means that the

term of the future for music sales. Once record companies figure out an encryption technology that allows it to charge people for on-line music, it would have a way to sell CDs without the cost of actually pressing a record and keeping it in an expensive high street shop.

In the UK, the British Phonographic Institute has acted to remove unlicensed music from just five sites - but such is the confusion over Internet copyright law that they acted not against students in a back bedroom but some of Britain's biggest companies. BT, the BBC, Demon Internet and Virgin Net had all unknowingly placed music that could be copied on their sites and the BPI forced them to remove it.

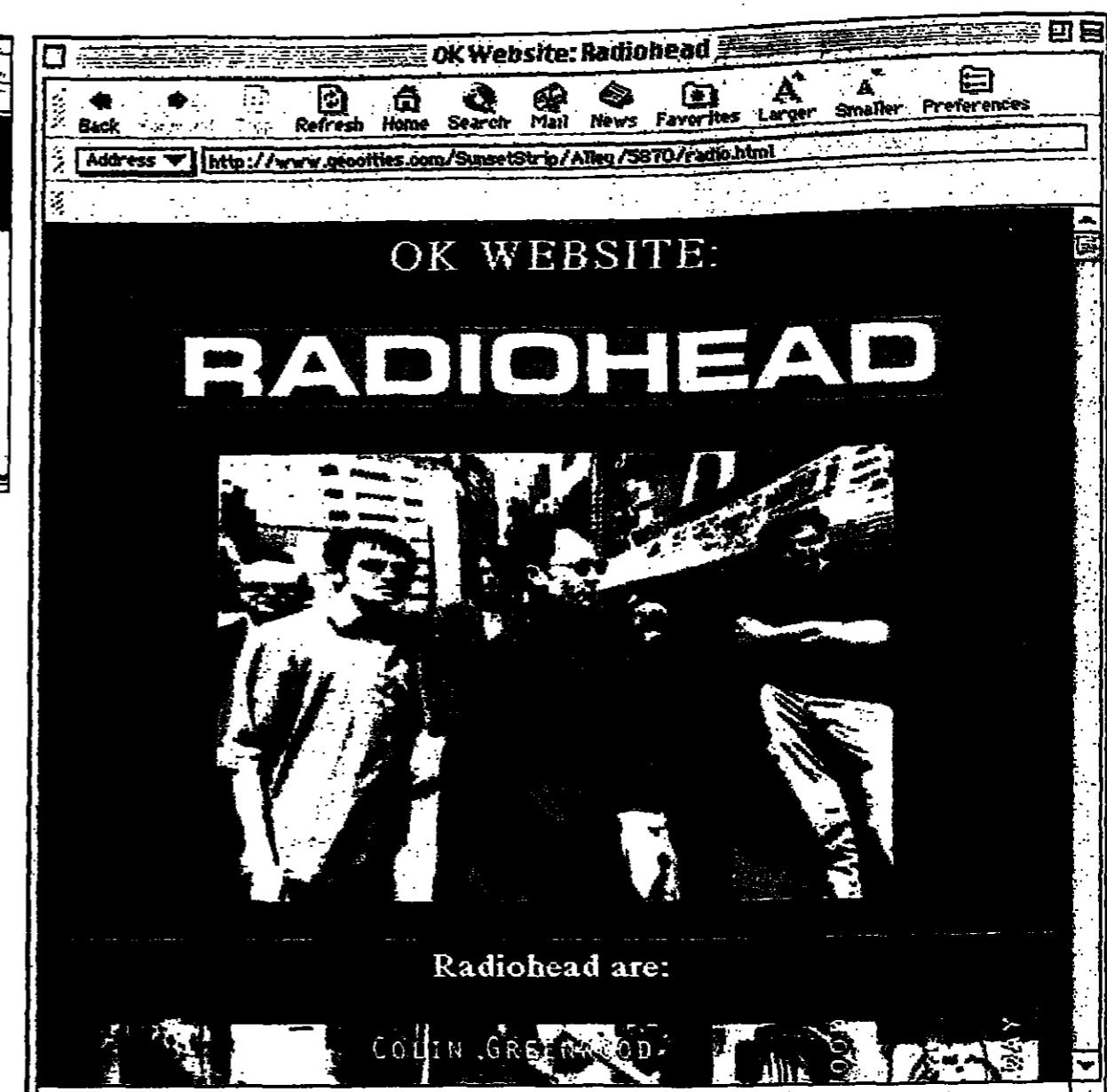
The irony for the music industry is that the Internet is likely to be the distribution sys-

tem that reaches more people than they ever will playing in the local pub.

And not everyone agrees that the threat is yet so great: "It is still a long way down the line that hardware that you can download on will be as ubiquitous as the hi-fi," says John Harris of music magazine *Select*.

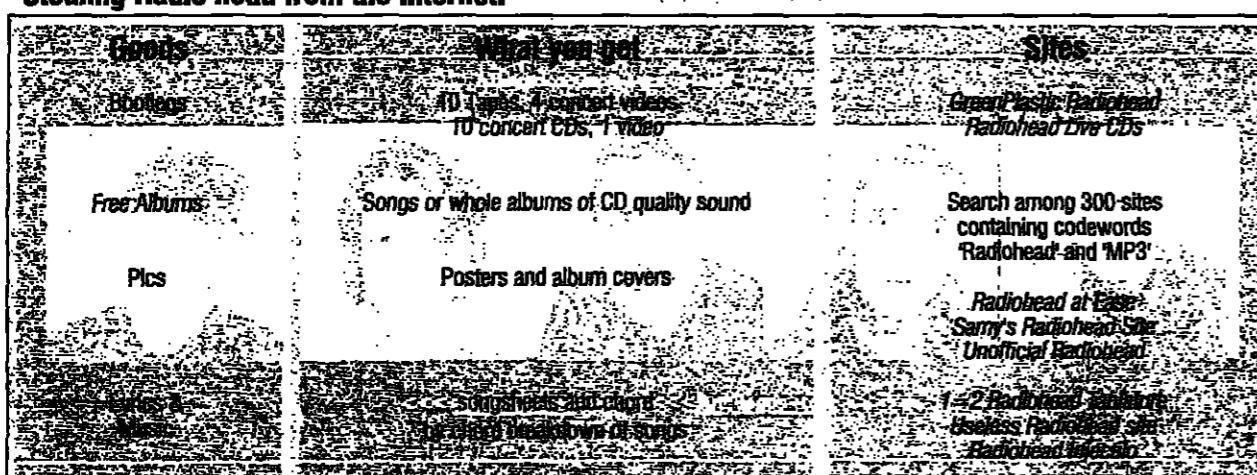
"And it's wrong that the copyright police should be stamping on 14-year-old bedroom enthusiasts."

One 25-year-old on-line private music specialist is unconcerned about the new lobby group: "By the time they have changed the law to deal with MP3 there will be some new technology along that their law won't cover. It all changes too fast for them."



Fans can visit Radiohead's Internet site above and, from left, Led Zeppelin, The Beatles and Nirvana

### Stealing Radiohead from the Internet:



## Woodward lawyer in row over guilt claim

By David Usborne  
in New York



A LAWYER who represented British nanny Louise Woodward yesterday rejected claims that she told a United States police officer who arrested her for drunken driving that she now believed her client guilty of murder.

"It is not true, it's a fabrication," the British-born lawyer, Elaine Whitfield-Sharp, insisted yesterday.

Ms Whitfield-Sharp, who admitted the drunken driving offence in court in Massachusetts on Tuesday, was the junior member of the defence team in last year's trial of Woodward for the murder of baby Matthew Eappen, which drew immense international attention.

Woodward has been living in the lawyer's home in Boston pending the outcome of appeals.

Ms Whitfield-Sharp was pulled over for erratic driving last Friday.

The police officer involved is understood to have stated in his official report that Ms Whitfield-Sharp complained of having been under unusual stress because she had reached the conclusion since the trial's end that Ms Woodward was indeed guilty of murdering the boy, who

case and given a mandatory life sentence.

Later, however, Judge Hiller Zobel reduced the conviction to one of manslaughter and ruled that the 279 days she had already served in prison was sufficient punishment.

Since an appeal hearing at the highest Massachusetts' court on 6 March this year, Woodward has remained in the state, forbidden access to her passport, awaiting the outcome.

The court's panel of seven judges, which is expected to release its ruling any day, has a range of possible options, including confirming Judge Zobel's decision, which would allow Woodward to return home, or reinstating the life sentence.

The police report was not publicly available yesterday, making verification of the officer's alleged statement impossible.

While such a claim could be deeply embarrassing to the defence, it could have no material bearing on the case, if only because of Ms Whitfield-Sharp's state of intoxication at the time.

Woodward was found guilty on 31 October last year of second-degree murder in the

## Tonsil patients put up in hotel

CHILDREN who have had operations to remove their tonsils are being put up in a hotel to free up hospital beds.

Derriford hospital in Plymouth, Devon, is paying £60 a night for the children to stay in the hotel with their parents. So far six have enjoyed bed and breakfast just ten minutes from the hospital so that they can get back quickly if there are any complications.

It is believed to be the first scheme of its sort in the country and if it is successful it may be extended to other patients.

Terri West, spokeswoman for the hospital, said the aim of the scheme was to free up beds rather than to save money on care. "This is still very much a trial and it involves patients who do not need medical care. It is for their reassurance if they live some distance away from the hospital that they feel they can come back if they need."

There are no medical facilities at the hotel but the hospital says they are not needed because all of the patients involved are fit to be discharged.

"Obviously nobody will be discharged unless they are fit to be," said Ms West.

## TransPort by Nicky Clarke.

The photo: 1. Robbie Williams 2. Robbie Williams 3. Robbie Williams 4. Robbie Williams 5. Robbie Williams 6. Robbie Williams 7. Robbie Williams







# Select committee summons 'fat cats'

By Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

THREE directors who made personal fortunes totalling over £60m from the sale of privatised railway leasing companies have been summoned by a Commons select committee for an inquiry into the way the taxpayer was taken for a ride.

John Pridaux joined the ranks of the rail privatisation "fat cats" after making £15m from the sale of Angel Trams to the Royal Bank of Scotland.

Sandy Anderson, a former BR manager, made £36m after leading the buyout of the leasing company, Porterbrook, which the managers sold to Stagecoach for more than £800m. Andrew Jukes made £15.9m from a stake of £110,000 in the sale of a third leasing company, Eversholt, to Forward Trust.

All three directors have been called to appear next Wednesday by the public spending watchdog, the

Public Accounts Committee, which is investigating the privatisation of the three rolling stock leasing companies.

The Tory chairman of the committee, David Davis, is a former minister and ex-trouble shooter, with a reputation for tough talking. The committee inquiry could cause embarrassment for former Tory transport ministers, Sir George Young and Sir Brian Mawhinney - both now members of William Hague's Shadow Cabinet - who were responsible for the sell-offs.

But the permanent secretary at the Department of Transport, Andrew Turnbull, will be in the firing line over a damning report by the National Audit Office in March, this year, which said updated valuations were not made "because the then Government's overriding objective was to privatisate the rolling stock leasing companies as soon as practicable".

The row over the sale and the creation of three multi-millionaires from

taxpayers' assets became an election issue last year with the "fat cats" controversy contributing to the loss of credibility in John Major's government.

The directors will be questioned about the findings in the NAO report, which estimated that the taxpayer had received £1.8bn for companies which had a value of £2.9bn. It criticised the Department of Transport for failing to include a clawback provision on profits for any resale.

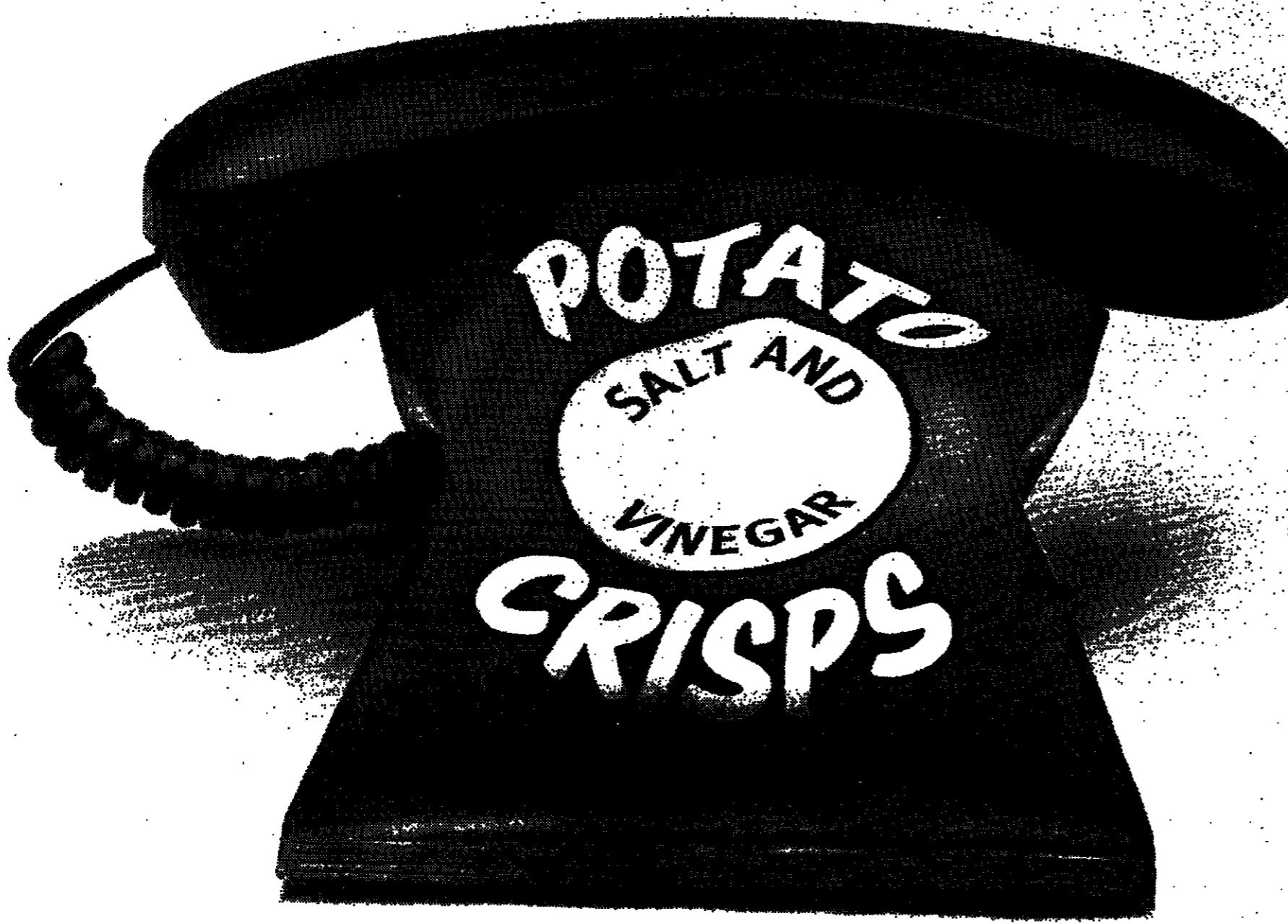
The cross-party committee will also be questioning Hambros who advised the Government on the sale, Brian Souter, the head of Stagecoach Holdings and others who bought the businesses including an official of the Royal Bank of Scotland.

The NAO report said the purchasers of Eversholt and Porterbrook were management and employee buy-out teams backed by financial institutions which aimed to realise a significant profit on investments within three to five years.



The Secretary of State for Defence, George Robertson, standing among troops from Ukraine and Poland on a joint training exercise at Stanford Army Training Base in Norfolk yesterday. Photograph: Adam Butler/PA

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## Mystery of disappearing trainees

By Barrie Clement  
Labour Editor

NEARLY one in eight of the young people leaving the government's flagship New Deal scheme have simply disappeared, according to official figures released yesterday.

Some may have gone to prison, others switched to alternative benefits, became pregnant, dropped out or finally acknowledged they had been working in the black economy. Andrew Smith, employment minister, also acknowledged that an unknown number may have become destitute.

Publishing the first government figures since pilots of the programme began in January, Mr Smith pledged to find out where the "disappeared" had ended up.

He conceded that the scheme so far had involved more carrot than stick. Just 35 of the 16,400 participants had been the subject of a "benefit penalty" for falling foul of the system. A further 135 cases have been referred to an independent adjudicator to decide whether the young people concerned should have 40 per cent of their state payments removed.

More than four out of 10 of the 18- to 24-year-olds on the scheme have secured jobs without any subsidy from the taxpayer, the figures revealed.

Just over one in 10 have gone into jobs which carry a £60 a week subvention to the employer from the state.

Since those figures were compiled for 12 "pathfinders" areas between January and March, the scheme has gone nationwide and another 18,000 young people who have been out of work six months or more, have joined the scheme.

Mr Smith said the initial figures should be treated with

caution, but there were early indications that the programme was "popular with young people and employers," and that it had enjoyed an encouraging start.

He pointed out that one in six of the young people on the scheme had volunteered to join early before they had been out of work for six months. He said 10,000 employers had signed up to provide subsidised jobs and the initiative had exceeded expectations.

Figures from the pilot stage of the programme showed 12,000 participants were still on the "Gateway" induction scheme which was designed to prepare the young people for one of four options: subsidised employment, full time education or training, a place on the government's environment task force or a job with a voluntary organisation.

The Employment Minister conceded however that the "ultimate test" would be how the programme compared with previous schemes and that would not become clear until the full results were available at the end of the year.

Angela Brown, Employment Spokeswoman, said she had reservations about the figures and said that many of the "hard cases" were still at the Gateway stage and would constitute the real test.

Conservatives would welcome the scheme if it provided real long term jobs for ex-offenders, the disabled and ethnic minorities she said.

The figures released yesterday showed that 2,000 jobs had been created from a programme worth £12m - £6,000 for each job, she said.

Her colleague David Willets said the statistics seemed to show that young people had done no better under New Deal than they had done before.

## UK attacked over human rights policy

THE United Kingdom falls short of international human rights standards, Amnesty International said today.

The Government's Human Rights Bill, going through Parliament, will incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. But the human rights pressure group Amnesty wants the Government to go much further.

"The Government needs to ensure that its own house is in order if it is to have effective influence on human rights in other countries," Amnesty's director, David Bull, said.

Amnesty produced a report today to mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It stands as a challenge to the Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's claims to be following an ethical foreign policy.

The study highlights areas where the UK falls short of international standards on human rights and calls for the Gov-

ernment to act on eight points.

It says Britain should ratify and observe all international human rights treaties and standards and abolish the death penalty - which is still permitted, in theory, as a punishment for some crimes.

The Government should also take every opportunity to raise human rights issues with international bodies such as the United Nations and European Union and ensure human rights issues are adequately reflected in foreign policies.

Inside the UK, every asylum claim should be scrutinised carefully to ensure that foreigners at risk of persecution are not forced to go home. Arms exports must be continually monitored and controlled.

The Government should also increase the openness and transparency of its human rights policies and decision-making, and support the establishment of a permanent and independent International Criminal Court.

Girl, 5, ac  
Uncle, 12,

Place  
film  
by T

By Jane Ghol

Channel 4 presenter defies criticism of programme that showed family cooking and consuming afterbirth 'to reflect rituals of other cultures'

## Placenta-eating film attacked by TV watchdog

By Janine Gibson  
Media Correspondent

A TELEVISION show which showed people cooking and eating a human placenta has been criticised by the Broadcasting Standards Commission.

In a report published today, the BSC television watchdog said that *TV Dinners*, the Channel 4 programme presented by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, "breached a convention in a way which would have been disagreeable to many". A BSC statement added that, despite pre-transmission warning about the programme's content, it "would have taken many viewers by surprise".

Nine complainants felt the programme, which attracted 2 million viewers when broadcast in February, was distasteful. A few referred to the practice of eating placenta as cannibalism.

Mr Fearnley-Whittingstall said yesterday: "There's nothing prescriptive about *TV Dinners* as a series; it's a fairly light-hearted mix of cooking and social documentary, it reflects all kinds of different approaches, including people who feel the need to break a food taboo."

"If I wasn't getting a number of complaints I would consider I wasn't doing my job. It was one of the stories I most enjoyed doing. There's a lot of complacency in the way we ap-

proach our diet and food production, which is why I'm quite happy to be seen eating squirrels and, indeed, placenta. People need to be shocked to make them think about the issues in eating food."

Of the family who ate the placenta in the programme, Mr Fearnley-Whittingstall said that it was obvious it was "a very meaningful thing for them, something they really believed in and not done for shock value". The *Clear family* decided that, to mark their first grandchild's birth, family and friends would eat the placenta to reflect rituals and customs from other cultures. The idea was to construct a ceremony in which the guests would symbolically join in their gene pool by sharing part of the baby, Indie-Mo's placenta. The family wrote to the programme's producers, Ricochet Films, for recipe advice.

Consumption of the afterbirth can be traced to 1556, when a traveller to the New World reported that Indians ate the placenta immediately after giving birth. Cooking and eating placentas is widely practised among native peoples of Brazil and certain Maori tribes.

In Europe, it was regularly added to chicken broth and served to recently delivered women until the mid-19th century. More recently, in her book *Alternative Maternity*, Nicky



The presenter of *TV Dinners*, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, with the placenta dish, decorated with a model of a baby

Photograph: Channel 4

## Agency backs drug-test kits

By Jason Bennett  
Crime Correspondent

A NATIONAL drugs agency yesterday defended the use of kits to test ecstasy and other illegal substances after the Government's drug "czar" criticised them as "immoral" and called for them to be banned.

Keith Hellawell, the UK Drugs Co-ordinator, reacted angrily to the news that a company was selling the kits for as little as £5 to people who wanted to check pills and powders before buying them.

The devices are sold by at least two firms - the Green Party and a private company - and can detect several drugs, including pure ecstasy or MDMA, amphetamine and a hallucinogen called 2CB. The substances are identified by pouring a chemical on to a tiny amount of the drug, which changes colour and be compared with an identification chart.

Mr Hellawell said he wanted the kits banned "because they give people a false sense of security. They do not make ecstasy or any other drug less dangerous. It seems to be an immoral money-making venture."

But Mike Goodman, director of Release, the national drug and legal organisation, disagreed. "We believe these testing kits should be made available to young people. It's a pragmatic measure and has

some benefit in reducing the amount of rogue drugs taken and allows people to have a better idea of what they are taking."

However, he warned: "These kits are not a panacea - they don't tell you the strength of the drug, or what impurities are present. It should be used as part of a risk reduction policy."

One of the kits, known as Easy Test, which went on sale a couple of months ago via mail order and the Internet, has already sold about 2,000 at £5 each. The kits can recognise six different types of drugs, and can be used about 15 times. The Green Party product costs £15, or £34 for a more accurate model.

The devices were first developed in the Netherlands and used as a method of detecting adulterated pills. Dealers frequently mix drugs such as speed with other substances, including baking soda or headache tablets and try to sell them as ecstasy. Several deaths have been linked to the mixing of unknown drugs.

Dylan Trump, who sells the Easy Test kits, told the BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme: "We are not encouraging people to use the drug, merely providing more information about the drugs they are taking."

But Ian Betts, the mother of Leah Betts who died in 1995 after taking ecstasy on her 18th birthday, said Mr Trump's claims were "complete nonsense" and "irresponsible".

## Girl, 5, accuses uncle, 12, of rape

A FIVE-YEAR-OLD girl told a court yesterday how she was raped when she went out to play with two 12-year-old boys on a Sunday afternoon.

The girl, speaking through a video link, said how she was taken to a cemetery in Leeds on 14 September last year when the two other 12-year-old boys, who she said lived with and another 12-year-old, took it in turns to have sex with her.

The girl's uncle, who is now aged 13, has admitted indecent assault. The other boy, still aged 12, denies rape.

Nicholas Campbell, for the prosecution, told the jury that the girl kicked and screamed as she was raped. He said the 12-year-old raped the girl the first

time and then threatened the girl's uncle that he would burn his clothes if he did not also have sex with the girl.

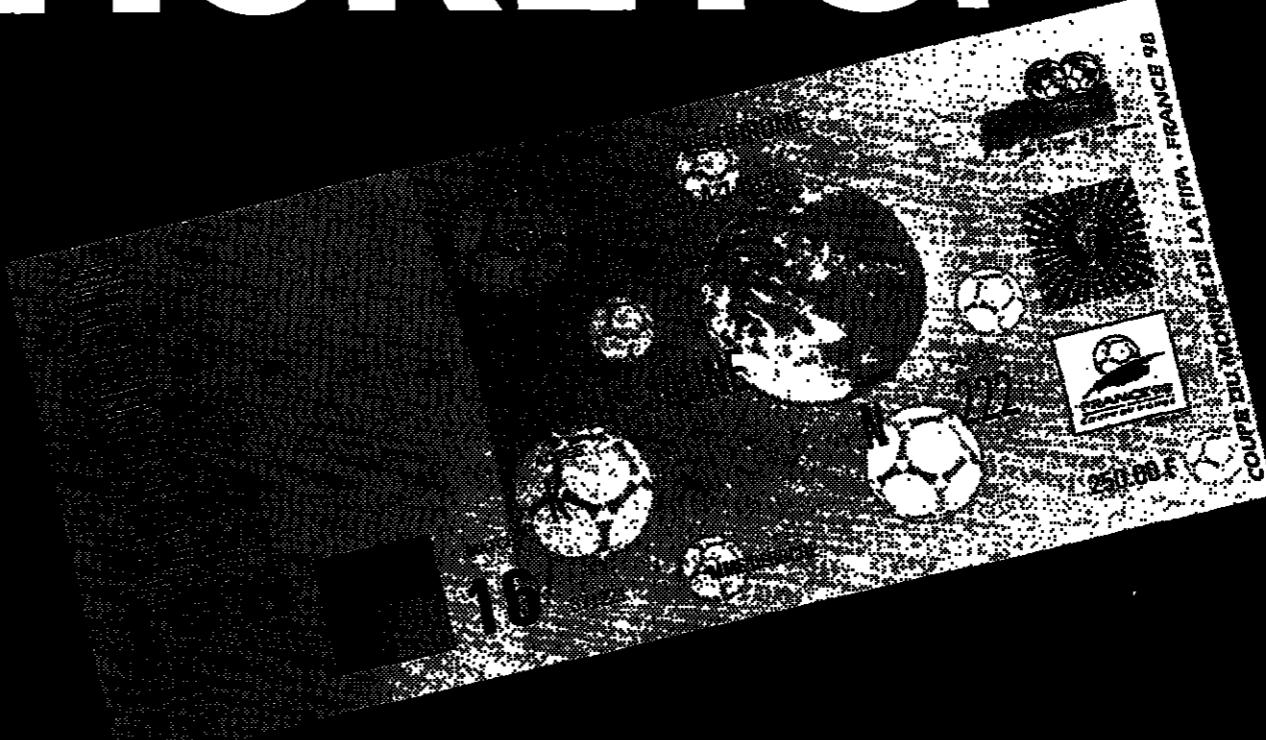
After the uncle had sex with her the first boy raped her for a second time. The girl said that she thought the boys were going to kill her.

Questioned by defence barrister Timothy Stead, the girl denied she had been playing games in the cemetery and insisted the boys had had sex with her.

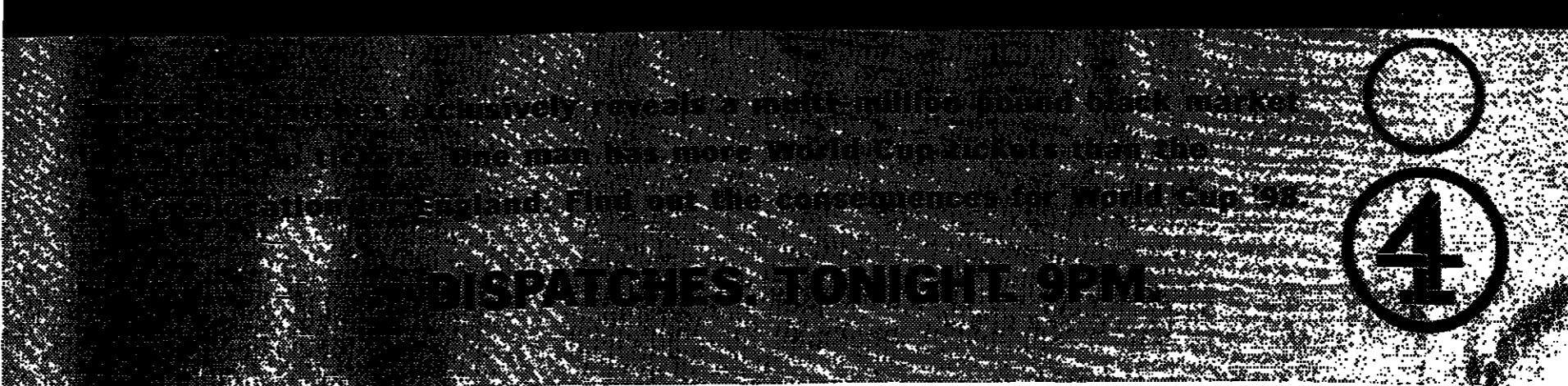
The girl's uncle, giving evidence for the prosecution, said he had got on top of her - after the other boy - when he was threatened, but did not have full sex.

The case was adjourned until today.

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# Are Britain's farmers right to moan?

TRACTOR dealers, feed merchants, fertiliser manufacturers, vets and a whole range of industries dependent on agriculture joined Britain's farmers yesterday in calling on the Government to act over the crisis in farm incomes, which nearly halved over the past year.

The financial slump is now threatening the whole rural economy, they warned in a "rural charter" setting out their demands for action, which they signed and sent to Tony Blair.

They urged him to move to bring down the high level of the pound on the foreign exchanges which is doing more than anything else to cut farm revenues. They are also seeking a meeting with the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, to press their case.

The leaders of 25 agricultural trade bodies and organisations allied to farming, ranging from the British Agricultural and Garden Machinery Association to the United Kingdom Agricultural Supply Association, met at the National Farmers' Union headquarters in London to highlight what they described as the "knock-on" effect on the rural economy of the farming income drop.

The falls have been substantial: over the past year, farm incomes as a whole in Britain have gone down by 45 per cent and in some sectors by even more: the 12,000 lowland cattle and sheep farmers in England have suffered a 65 per cent drop. The farm gate price of wheat fell from £121.70 per tonne in January 1996 to £77.70

Tony Blair is being petitioned by agricultural groups pleading poverty. Michael McCarthy reports



Farmers at Banbury cattle market, which is to close. In its heyday it was at the heart of the Oxfordshire town and credited as being Europe's largest livestock market. Photograph: John Vos

in January this year; of milk from 25p to 20p per litre; and of beef from £1.19 per kilo to 90p.

"When the farming industry is hurting, so is the rest of the rural

economy," said Ben Gill, the NFU's president. "We are calling on the Government and other key economic decision makers to act on the rural char-

ter to ensure a vibrant rural economy for future generations."

The NFU said that the number of tractors registered for road use in the UK in the first four

months of 1998 fell by 47 per cent compared with the same period the previous year. Agricultural investment is forecast to fall by 37 per cent this year, and a

survey of leaders from industries allied to farming revealed business confidence at its lowest level in living memory.

However, Jack Cunningham,

the Minister of Agriculture, yesterday denied that the rural economy as a whole was suffering. "I accept that some aspects of farming have had a

very difficult time for the last couple of years, particularly in the livestock sector," he said.

"Overall, farm incomes have been in decline for almost two decades, apart from a small and temporary arrest in the early 1990s. But I don't accept that everyone in the countryside is getting very much poorer. That's not the case. Rural unemployment fell in the last 12 months by 4 per cent."

The health and strength of the rural economy "must go way beyond farming", he said, which was why the Government was focusing on issues such as rural transport, applying health action zones and the New Deal for the unemployed to rural areas, and concentrating European Union funds on rural enterprises.

Ironically, the new protest from the farmers and their supplying industries came on a day with some long-awaited good news: the first lifting of the EU beef ban prompted by the BSE scare. Exports of beef from Ulster, which comes from "guaranteed" BSE-free herds, can resume from next week, the European Commission said.

The restoration of trade comes more than two years after the mad cow scare prompted the Commission to impose a world-wide export blockade - the rest of the UK's beef export market remains closed for the time being. Ulster has been cleared because it has a computerised cattle monitoring system which Brussels says provides sufficient safeguards against the transmission of BSE.

## 'I see no investment in the land'

A SHARP decline in Donald Arscott's fortunes in the past two years has cast a dark shadow over his family's future in agriculture, writes Linus Gregoriadis.

Like many farmers, Mr Arscott, who owns a 125-acre lowland farm in Devon, has seen his profits virtually disappear because of BSE scares and the strength of the pound.

His dairy and beef farm, near Honiton in the Blackdown Hills, made a net profit

of £28,500 in the financial year ending May 1996, but in the following year his profit margin fell to £5,021. He will be lucky if he has broken even in the last 12 months. "My 79-year-old mother, who was born on this farm, said to me recently, 'I have seen good times and bad times in farming, but I have never seen them like they are now,'" he said.

"The situation for farmers is diabolical. People say to us that we should have saved for a rainy

day when we were having good times, but farmers don't do that. They invest their money in their farms to build for the future.

"Standing on my farm I can see half a dozen farms in a similar situation. I can't see any investment going on in any of them."

Mr Arscott, a 52-year-old grandfather, who admits he could sell up and live comfortably for the rest of his life, said: "The stress has been unbelievable. We have bills in our house

wants to build for his sons' future. "There has been no investment in the farm in the last 12 months and I can see no investment in the next 12 months. When you are in this business you look to expand all the time, especially when you have two sons."

Mr Arscott believes there is hope, however. "I think that if the pound comes down to a sensible level and we get the beef ban lifted then things should start to get better," he said.

THE MOST recent setbacks in the industry's fortunes have made life worse for William Jenkins, a Welsh hill farmer who has made no profit for six years.

His quality of life continues to slip as the value of European Union subsidies and the demand for his animals falls.

Mr Jenkins, who grazes sheep, cows, calves and horses on 160 leased acres in Blackwood, Monmouthshire, said: "The stress has been unbelievable. My wife now works in a school, then does farm work followed by housework. She doesn't do it to take us on holiday to Florida. She works to enable me to farm." Mr Jenkins

owes from Christmas because we haven't got the money."

Mr Jenkins, 48, says he would not want his three daughters to go into farming. "I always wanted to be a farmer, but I would never want my children to go through these last few years. The pressure has been unbearable. My wife now works in a school, then does farm work followed by housework. She doesn't do it to take us on holiday to Florida. She works to enable me to farm." Mr Jenkins

who rears animals before selling them to lowland farmers, says combined circumstances have wrecked his livelihood.

"Since 1992 our EU subsidy

for living and working in the hills has been eroded. Our ewe premiums have also fallen because, although the price of our lambs has dropped in the market, the average cost of lamb across Europe has gone up.

"Because beef prices are the lowest they have been for the last 15 years, and the price of lamb is the lowest for 6 or 7 years, lowland farmers haven't got the money to buy."

Closure of auction houses through lack of business would be a disaster because, without competition, the supermarkets would have a monopoly".

Mr Jenkins added: "People say, 'why should farmers have a subsidy?' If I can't sell an animal in the market I still have to feed it. I'm losing more money all the time. It's different from any other industry."

## 'The pressure is unbelievable'

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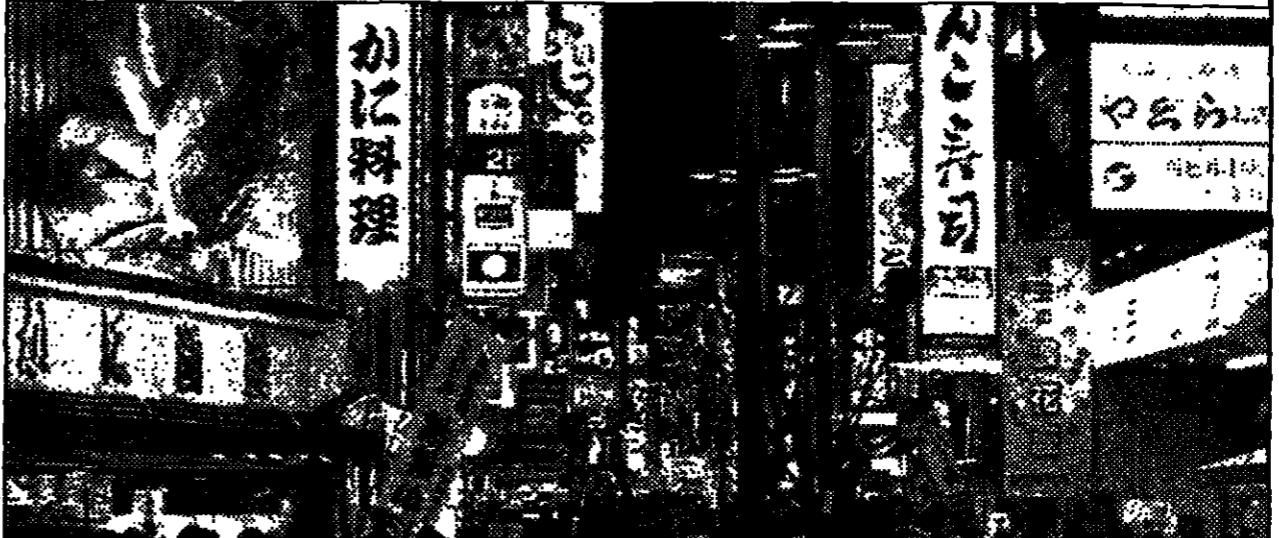
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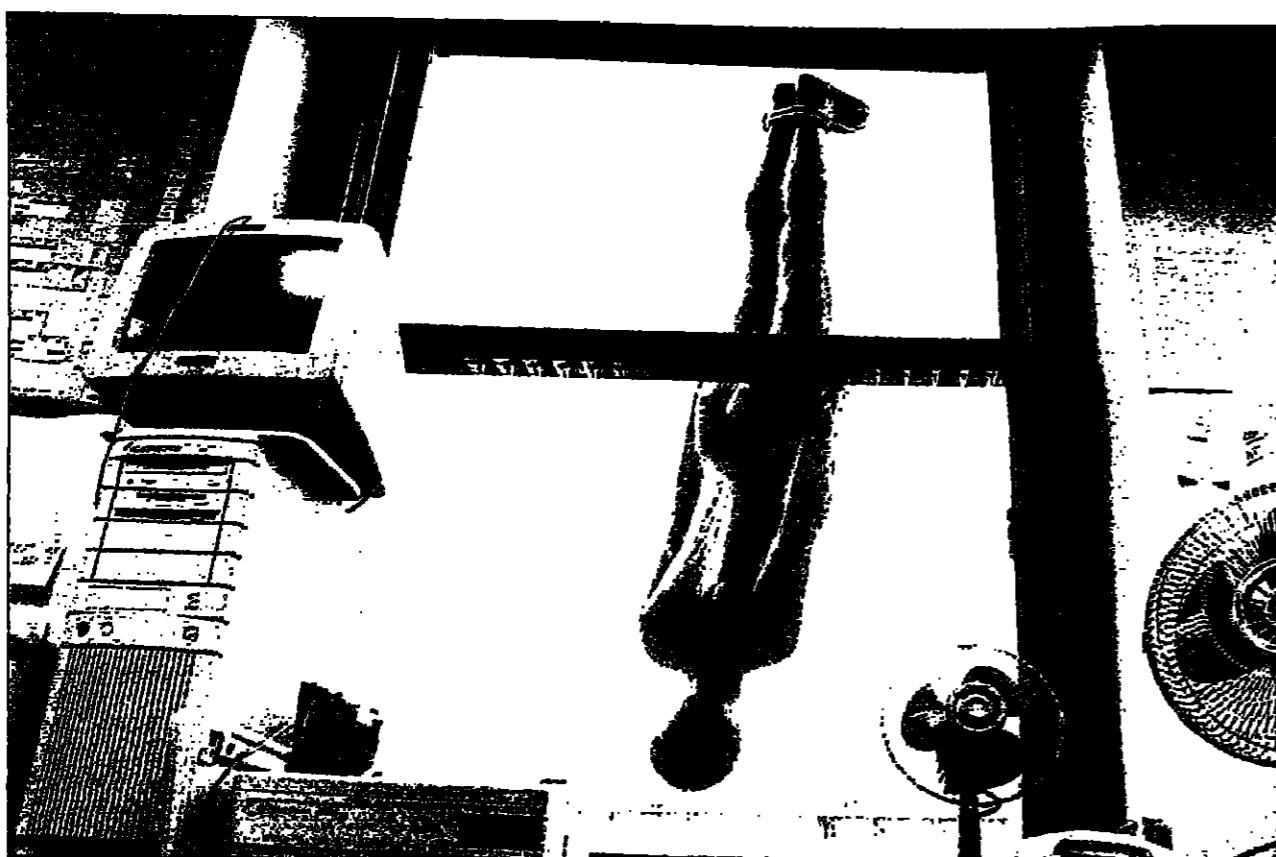
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Britain's oldest art institution is in the black and embracing change, says David Lister



Up-ended art at the RA. An Antony Gormley statue, seen from the Royal Society of Chemistry

## Euro rules threaten art market profits

By Anthony Bevins  
Political Editor

THE multi-million pound London art market is at real risk of being broken up by a new Brussels "tax", both the Government and MPs said yesterday.

In spite of protests by British ministers - Labour as well as Tory - and the European Parliament, the Commission is pushing ahead with plans to impose an artists' levy of up to 4 per cent on the resale of any work of art from next January.

It is expected that the proposal could drive force sales of more than £370m out of London - driving art owners off to auctioneers and dealers into levy-free havens like New York or Switzerland.

The levy would apply to the work any artist who is an EU national, or the national of member state who has been dead for

less than 70 years. It therefore covers work by artists ranging from Picasso, Matisse and Chagall through to Lucian Freud.

But a report from the Commons European Legislation Committee warned yesterday: "The Government appears to be short of allies amongst the other member states in its opposition to this proposal."

Marking their disapproval of the legislative process, the all-party committee put down a protest motion, blocking British ministerial agreement. Ian McCartney, the industry minister, indicated, however, that there was no risk of the move getting his vote.

"The amended proposal makes no concession to UK concerns that the proposal would damage the competitiveness of London's international art market in relation to its main competitor - New York - and other third-country

markets," he told the MPs. It has been estimated that the levy would slash the earnings of London auctioneers and dealers by up to £68m a year, with the potential loss of about 5,000 jobs, and only £2m going to British artists or their heirs.

"Moreover," Mr McCartney added, "experience abroad shows that the majority of artists would get little, if anything. Royalties would go mainly to well-known artists or, more likely, to their heirs. The costs of the proposal in terms of damaging Community art markets would considerably outweigh the benefits to individual artists."

The European Parliament attempted to soften the blow by suggesting new price bands, lower royalty rates, and royalties that would apply only to profits, rather than the entire selling price - but all those changes were rejected by the

## Royal Academy goes out on a limb to attract young audience

TODAY is not only the start of the season for Middle England's painters. It is also the start of a cultural rehabilitation for Britain's oldest art institution.

When the Royal Academy opens its doors in Piccadilly for the first private view of the annual Summer Show, Sir Philip Dowson, the president, and David Gordon, the secretary, will be able to greet friends and sponsors, press and critics with beaming smiles and promises of a cutting-edge future.

The institution is moving back into the black after mounting debts. Craigie Aitchison, the artist who resigned as an RA in high dudgeon last year, has come back to the fold. "Sensation", the exhibition of radical young British artists, attracted huge crowds. The latest elections to the academy show a spirited attempt to embrace the new. One new RA, David Mach, predicts "raunchy" times ahead.

Six months is evidently a long time in art. Last autumn, the Royal Academy was in crisis: the culmination of 12 months during which its bursar had been

shall go on campaigning to get him sacked." There were even reports of a fist fight between two of the Academy's most senior officials.

Imprisonment, fistcuffs and a threatened castration: it was not what Sir Joshua Reynolds had in mind 230 years ago when he established the art world's most senior body.

Last year's crisis at one stage looked like destroying the relatively new regime under Sir Philip Dowson, the architect, and David Gordon, the former ITN chief executive. The fault was not entirely theirs. Competition for the declining pot of sponsorship cash has grown ever more intense.

With no permanent collection of its own to lend, the Academy needs all Mr Rosenthal's celebrated network of contacts to secure the best exhibitions.

The academy's membership is indeed ageing and many of the 80-strong membership could not understand why the Academy was hosting an exhibition of young Turks brought in from the Saatchi collection instead of honouring its own.

The annual report shows that last year the Academy cut its accumulated deficit to £1.8m, returning an unexpected operating surplus of £175,000. Sir Philip adds that plans for the future included a £100,000 feasibility study into taking over the nearby vacated Museum of Mankind, and turning it into an educational centre.

The election of David Mach, 42, a controversial sculptor responsible for a £760,000 locomotive made of house bricks, is a clear signal from the academy that it wants to embrace change, as do the elections of two other artists in their forties, Richard Deacon, a sculptor, and Stephen Farthing, the head of the Ruskin School of Drawing, at Oxford.

Mr Mach says: "For me, it's got to get rid of its conservative reputation. If we can chip away at that it's going to be quite a raunchy place. I don't see why it has to be stuffy. They have to get young people. You have to get younger sooner or later. It's obvious because the rest of them are going to die."

That is logic of a sort. The academy's quest for youth, blockbusters and sharper business acumen also has a sort of logic to it. But it remains a short-term solution. The academy, which makes no pronouncements about the state of art, and whose own school has lost its pre-eminent place in art education, has yet to find a role and purpose in today's mercurial art world - a world which does not respect authority and tradition and, as Damien Hirst's remarks showed, does not want to be a member of an exclusive club with no power and little authority.

The present regime has not yet made a statement of changing philosophy to accompany the improving balance sheets.

### £1m price tag on Gormley work

A CENTREPIECE of the Summer Exhibition will be a sculpture by Antony Gormley, who has valued it at £1m, writes David Lister.

*Critical Mass* comprises 60 life-size cast-iron figures each weighing a tonne. The body casts are in the centre and around the outsides of the courtyard of the Royal Academy. They were moulded from Gormley's body in 12 distinct positions. Fourteen of the casts are suspended from the facade of Burlington House and neighbouring buildings.

Hitherto the highest price commanded at auction by the former Turner Prize winner is £23,000. He sold maquettes of his *Angel of the North* for £145,000 at the London Art Fair in January.

sent to prison for embezzlement of £400,000 as the deficit climbed to £3m. Four academicians resigned over "Sensation" and there was not exactly a rush to take their place.

Rachel Whiteread, who represented Britain at the Venice Biennale, was elected to the academy, but turned it down. Damien Hirst added that he would never join such a "pompous and boring" organisation. There were pickets outside the "Sensation" exhibition in protest over a depiction on the walls of Myra Hindley, the Moors Murderer.

Norman Rosenthal, the exhibitions organiser, was censured by a meeting of the Academicians. He said publicly he doubted that one of the resisters, John Ward, would be judged "a great artist". Mr Ward said: "I want his balls. I

## Firefighters reach for water guns

WATER guns instead of unwieldy hoses are being used by firefighters for the first time in Britain in a pilot scheme in West Yorkshire.

Firefighters at Leeds yesterday demonstrated how the guns could be used to put out a blazing car (pictured), and said that they would be particularly useful in areas where it was difficult to run hoses because of distance from a water supply.

The water guns, which are made in Holland, are carried on the officer's back and run on compressed air, firing blasts of water from a 10-litre pack. They are said to work most effectively when used in pairs with the jets aimed at the base of a fire.

If the West Yorkshire trials are successful, the water guns, which cost £2,500 each, will be used by fire brigades across the country.

Photograph: Peter Byrne/Guzelian



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## Japanese cars pose greater injury risk

By Randeep Ramesh  
Transport Correspondent

OCCUPANTS of some of the best-selling Far Eastern hatchback cars face an "unacceptably" high risk of serious injury in accidents, according to the results of official European crash protection tests.

Popular Japanese car makers Honda, Suzuki and their Korean counterparts Daewoo and Hyundai were all cited as manufacturers that needed to "improve safety standards".

Twelve models were rammed into deformable walls to simulate crash conditions - part of the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP) - at the Transport Research Laboratory.

European car-makers topped the safety tables. The Audi A3, Renault Megane and the VW Golf achieved the maximum four stars in the tests. Experts said these car-makers had the advantage of newer models - while many of the Far Eastern makes were based on older designs.

This argument was used to explain the poor performance of the £17,000 Honda Civic. According to a spokesman for Honda, the model has been designed in 1992. "The Civic is in the second half of its working life - it is unfair to compare it with brand new cars," said a spokesman.

Others chose to question the legitimacy of the tests themselves. "These tests do have to be seen for what they are. They are not real life situations," said a spokesman for Daewoo,

whose £11,000 Lanos failed because the driver faced "an unacceptably high risk of chest injury".

However, in an interview in this week's *Autocar* magazine, Professor Adrian Hobbs, chairman of the Euro NCAP technical working group, defended the tests.

Professor Hobbs said while the tests could not represent every type of accident, they did represent the most important ones.

He also denied a suggestion that advice from car companies had been ignored. He went on:

"We had a meeting in July 1996 with the industry, which was a technical meeting. It was not very helpful because the industry basically came along to tell us why we shouldn't do an NCAP programme."

The real test for many manufacturers will come this October - when new models face tough new standards for side impact collisions.

Even the best performers were far from perfect. The Consumers' Association said the Audi A3 - although one of the highest scorers and with a very stable body shell - still had room for improvement in the frontal impact knee injury area.

"Car manufacturers have a long way to go to improve safety standards," said Andrew McIlwraith, editor of the CA's *Which? Car* magazine.

He added: "Although we've witnessed encouraging improvements in car safety design, we hope these widely publicised tests will force manufacturers to take safety more seriously."

## RAC ex-members try carpetbagging

By Glenda Cooper  
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

MORE than 500 former members of the Royal Automobile Club have tried to rejoin since it announced the sale of its roadside rescue service. Full members will get a payout of about £30,000 when the sale goes ahead later this year to the US company Cendant.

The ex-members say they should be able to rejoin because the RAC has a provision in its rules giving automatic readmission for those who reapply within three years of resigning. But yesterday the RAC said only those with full membership and voting rights on 27 March, when they imposed a moratorium to prevent carpetbagging, would be eligible for the windfall. While the club would welcome back former members, they would not be eligible for the payout, a spokesman said.

"For those who have resigned their membership, what the rules actually say is that if you wish to rejoin within three years you may do so without undergoing the formalities of the election procedure such as being nominated by two existing members. It doesn't mean you are automatically a member,"

you still have to reapply." Only the 12,000 full members of the RAC, once known as the Vatican of motordom, will benefit from the Cendant sale. They include the Tory MPs Shaun Woodward and Peter Luff and the president of the Liberal Democrat, Robert MacLennan. Others set to receive the bonuses are the designer Paul Smith and former Formula One champion Damon Hill.

Under its two-tier membership structure the 6 million "members" of the rescue service, who contribute the bulk of RAC profits, will not benefit and need not be consulted.

Overseas members are also excluded from the payout and have threatened legal action to force the RAC to extend payments to them. Next week there is expected to be a High Court hearing at which Jeffrey Rose, the ousted chairman, will seek an extraordinary general meeting, which the board of directors opposes.

The Automobile Association said disgruntled RAC members were turning to it, with figures up 50 per cent. Since launching an advertising campaign two weeks ago it had received 4,200 calls from RAC members.

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# Star Wars science brings space into close-up

The first pictures produced by a giant telescope have stunned astronomers, writes Charles Arthur

A TECHNOLOGY developed for Ronald Reagan's Star Wars missile defence system has delivered astonishing results in its first practical use – in the world's biggest ground-based telescope.

The European Southern Observatory (ESO) yesterday released the first images from its £374m Very Large Telescope (VLT) project, which will use an array of four telescopes each 8.2m (27ft) across to produce images of distant stars and perhaps their planets.

Among the first images is a stunning picture of the Butterfly Nebula, the remnants of a huge star that has blown off much of its hydrogen "fuel" in glowing gas clouds, while the original star has shrunk to a "white dwarf" in the centre of the picture. The details available, from three exposures each lasting 10 minutes, is as good as any from previous telescopes.

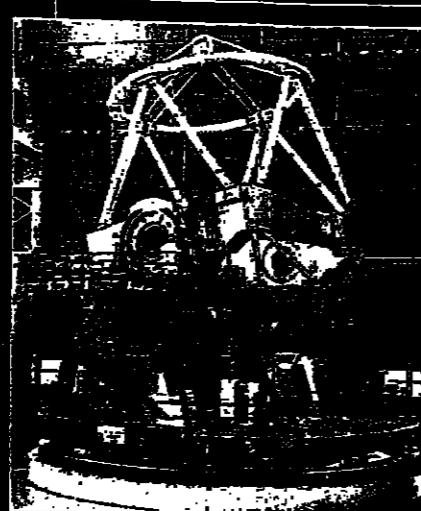
But this is only the beginning. When completed in around 2001, the VLT will consist of four identical telescopes, and be capable of resolving objects so tiny that it is like picking out an astronaut on the surface of the Moon, 400,000km (250,000 miles) away.

The key to its powers of resolution will be that the optical signals from the mirrors of the four telescopes will be combined, so that they function like a single mirror 16m across. That is bigger than any built on Earth and much larger than that on the orbiting Hubble Space Telescope – and thus gives rise to its extraordinary resolution.

The ESO team have far-sighted goals for it. One possibility is to capture images of giant planets that, scientists are increasingly sure, orbit distant stars in our galaxy.

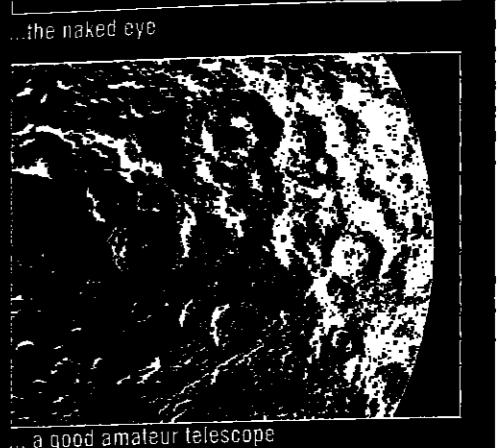
Ricardo Giacconi, director-general of the ESO, said before the first results appeared that "the VLT's investigations will

The most powerful telescope in the world



The Butterfly Nebula, pictured by the VLT (source: ESO) and (inset) the first of four telescopes comprising the VLT

What you would see with...



...in theory, with the completed VLT

shed light on how likely it is that conditions for the emergence of life exists in the universe". Another aim is to look at light from stars formed when the universe was very young – perhaps just 5 per cent of its present age.

Normally, ground-based telescopes have problems because gravity makes their mirrors sag, and they also have to compensate for the effects of the atmosphere, where air layers make images tremble (making the stars appear to twinkle). The VLT overcomes this by us-

ing tiny motors which can individually move elements of the mirror. A computer monitors the reflection of a reference star in some part of the scene in different parts of the main mirror: if that seems to shift, the motor moves a part of the mirror so that the image remains stable. The same system is also used to compensate for the sagging of the mirror under its own weight.

The ESO has also minimised atmospheric problems by building the VLT on the summit of the Cerro Paranal mountain in the Atacama desert, Chile, one of the driest places on Earth.

The UK does not belong to ESO, and has not been involved in the VLT's construction over the past 10 years. But non-member countries can participate, and individual astronomers can submit requests for telescope time. The Astronomer Royal, Sir Martin

Rees, of Cambridge University, thinks UK involvement in Gemini – a twin-telescope project, with 8m telescopes in Chile and Hawaii – makes up for it. "It is a pity the UK does not have a larger stake in next-generation telescopes. But I am not sure whether the British community would wish to be involved in the VLT rather than in an other large-telescope project."

■ A "sunquake" 40,000 times more powerful than the earth-

quake which devastated San Francisco in 1906 has been observed, it was disclosed yesterday. It was first proof that solar flares produce seismic waves in the Sun's interior similar to terrestrial earthquakes.

However, a quake on the Sun is on a different scale from any on Earth. The one spotted by the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory spacecraft produced waves nearly two miles high, travelling at 250,000mph over the Sun's surface. The quake, following a moderately-sized solar flare on in July 1996, appeared like ripples spreading from a rock dropped into a pool of water.

The findings were reported in the *Nature* science journal by researchers from Glasgow University and Stanford University, California, and presented at a news conference at the spring meeting of the American Geophysical Union in Boston.

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# The West's poisonous legacy

In Britain, depleted uranium is treated as a hazard. In Iraq, it still lies in the soil. By Robert Fisk

ACROSS the sands of southern Iraq, the residue of Allied depleted uranium (DU) shells lies untreated in the soil. But in Britain, the Government goes to enormous lengths to protect its people from the results of test firing the very weapons suspected of causing an increase in cancers among Iraqi children.

A Government document, published almost six months ago but virtually ignored, reveals that test-firing of DU shells in Britain is carried out into an open-sided concrete building called the "tunnel" and that radioactive residues are washed off, sealed in cement and transported to Cumbria for disposal.

Irqi doctors have long suspected that the children suffering from a four-fold increase in cancer in the south of the country - revealed in *The Independent* on 4 March - contracted their sickness from the Allied use of depleted uranium shells in the 1991 war. Tens of thousands of these projectiles were fired at the Iraqis in February 1991 in the fields south of the city of Basra, the fertile lands from which millions of Iraqis acquire their food. Many of the children dying of leukemia and lymphoma cancer were not even born when the war took place.

There has been no attempt by the US or Britain to find out the cause of the cancer outbreaks in Iraq, though US veterans' groups suspect DU shells, made of hard alloys which are tougher than tungsten and which ignite inside armoured vehicles, are responsible for thousands of cases of "Gulf War Syndrome" (including lymphoma cancers) among American soldiers who fought in the war. The US National Gulf Resource Centre says 40,000 US servicemen may have been exposed to depleted ura-



When Saddam's retreating forces ignited the Kuwaiti oilfields, there was a very visible environmental catastrophe. Now, a hidden poison is making its effect felt. Photograph: John Voss

nium dust on the battlefields. Tony Flint, acting chairman of the British Gulf War Veterans' and Families' Association says the same shells could be responsible for the death of 30 British veterans.

A review of the Ministry of Defence's radioactive waste and management practices, published by the Department of the Environment in December last year, however, shows government specialists here take the risk of contamination more seriously than imagined. According to the report by the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee, depleted uranium shells tested at the range at Eskmeals, on the Cumbrian coast, are fired into a spe-

cial tunnel fitted with a filtered extract system and pressure-washed with water to avoid contamination.

The washings are transferred to collecting tanks for eventual disposal in cemented drums to Drigg, the report says. If the DU shell is fixed into armour plate, then the plate itself is sent to Drigg for disposal. So concerned are the British authorities about health hazards from DU shells that an on-site health physics laboratory exists to monitor the workforce on the Eskmeals firing range. The Department of the Environment report says firings involving uranium have been going on at the range since 1981, and "just over 90 per cent of the total

weight of the shells has been recovered". On 1991 Gulf War battlefields, not a single attempt was made to recover contaminated residues.

The Eskmeals range pos-

sesses seven high-volume air samplers and 1,000 samples are taken annually. A special sampler operates to check what

the document calls "the critical group within the public [sic] ... identified as those living in Monk Moors". Depleted ura-

nium shells are also test-fired at Kirkcudbright in Scotland where 1.5 tonnes of the proj-

ectiles are targeted every year

into the Solway Firth. The

shells, the report says alarm-

ingly, "remain on the sea bed

where they will corrode with

time to form an insoluble sludge

composed of hydrated uranium oxide... Unsuccessful attempts

were made in 1993 to recover

some of these shells in order to

assess their corrosion state." A

small amount of depleted ura-

nium waste also occurs at the

Defence Evaluation and Re-

search Agency's site at Fort Hal-

stead in Kent disposed of, like

the contamination at Eskmeals,

to Drigg in Cumbria.

According to another Ameri-

can Gulf veterans' association,

Swords to Plowshares, when a

depleted uranium shell strikes

armour, up to 70 per cent of the

round burns, scattering radio-

active and chemically toxic

dust in and around the target.

The group quotes a US army

report as stating that "aerosol DU exposures to soldiers on the battlefield could be significant with potential radiological and toxicological effects... short-term effects of high doses can result in death, while long-term effects of low doses have been implicated in cancer". A 1993 US General Accounting Office report stated that American soldiers of the 144th Supply Company of the National Guard were never told of radiation hazards when ordered to recover US military vehicles in the Gulf that were the victim of "friendly fire" attacks using depleted uranium projectiles.

Western evidence is, thus, begining to bear out the claim by Iraqi doctors that the residues of cancer in their families.

The effectiveness of armour-piercing ammunition principally depends on its density of the material from which it is manufactured, and the British government report says depleted uranium shows "significant performance advantages over other metals". Which is not much comfort to Iraqi cancer sufferers, or Gulf War veterans.

Chirac denies crisis unit

PARIS (Reuters) — French President Jacques Chirac's office took the unusual step yesterday of denying a report that it had set up a "crisis unit" to try to block corruption probes into his Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR) party.

"The presidency categorically denies all the allegations concerning it which were published today as the main headline in the newspaper *Le Monde*," an Elysee Palace statement said.

"No such crisis unit exists at the presidency which regrets that the newspaper *Le Monde* did not deem it necessary to verify its story before publication," said the statement which was issued within an hour of the daily hitting the news stands.

*Le Monde* wrote that the purported unit included Dominique de Villepin, the powerful Elysee secretary-general, and other senior figures including a magistrate assigned as Chirac's legal adviser.

A series of potentially explosive judicial probes is currently underway into practices at Paris city hall during Chirac's tenure as mayor of the capital between 1977 and his election as president in 1995.

Legal sources say magistrates are probing allegations that the municipality then had on its payroll between 150 and 300 people, many of them RPR operatives with no municipal role.

The former Gaullist prime minister, Alain Juppé, was Chirac's deputy mayor in charge of the capital's finances from 1983 to 1995 while simultaneously serving as RPR secretary-general for much of that period.

*Le Monde* said Chirac's advisers feared Mr Juppé would soon be put under official investigation in the probe. The paper quoted an RPR politician as saying Chirac's crisis unit was specifically aimed at protecting Mr Juppé.

The former premier later released a statement condemning the article. "It is evidence of political and media pressure aimed at influencing and disturbing justice," Mr Juppé said.

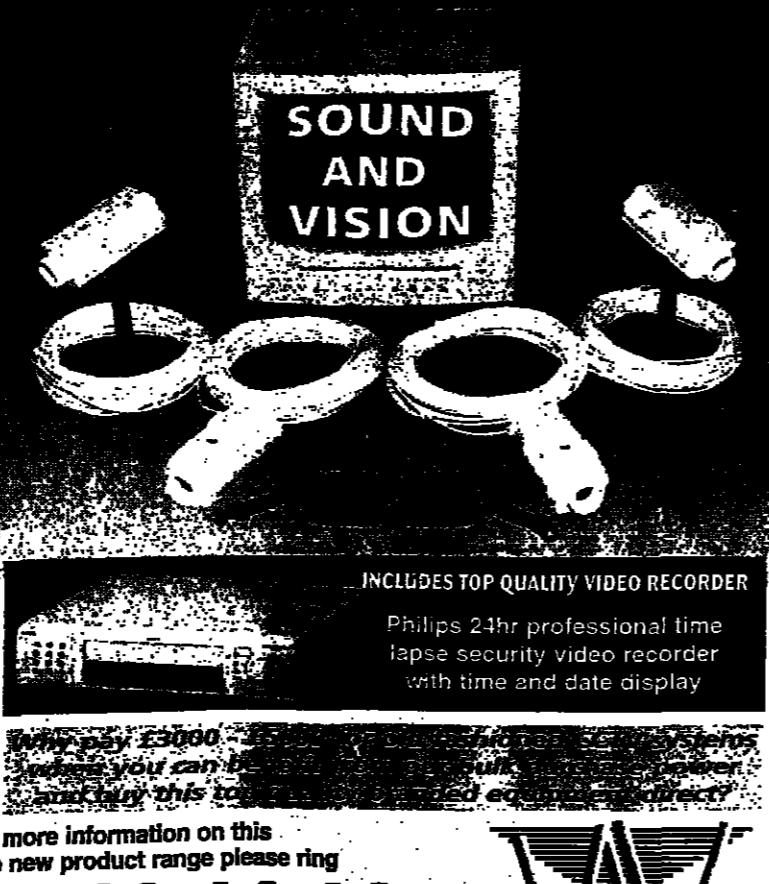
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## Jewish extremists' shacks plunge Jerusalem's old city into turmoil

By Deborah Horan  
in Jerusalem

SEVEN tin shacks, one partially demolished, stood on a sandy plot of land inside Jerusalem's Old City yesterday, while two dozen members of an extremist Jewish organisation waited to hear whether the authorities would allow them to stay.

Jerusalem's mayor, Ehud Olmert, had given the Ateret Cohanim, a secretive organisation dedicated to buying Arab property in the Old City and east Jerusalem, 24 hours to tear down the shacks. They were put up illegally on Monday night to protest against the murders of two Cohanim members, allegedly by Arab nationalists.

"We wanted to give a Zionist response," said group spokeswoman Kilia Harnoy. "We decided the only way left to show how we are fighting for Jerusalem and its unity is to build and that's why we went to this area."

By mid-afternoon, Hanan

Porat of the National Religious Party, a pro-settlement party that is part of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government coalition, had spoken with Mr Olmert to negotiate a compromise that would allow some of the Cohanim members to stay at the site.

Talk of a compromise smacked of a similar settlement made between the government and the Cohanim when its members took over a house in the Palestinian neighbourhood of Ras el-Amud last year. After days of confrontation with Palestinians and left-wing Israelis, a deal was reached that allowed 10 students from the organisation to stay at the site.

Palestinians fear a similar compromise will be reached this time, provoking more violence. On Tuesday, a demonstration against the shacks flared into violence when about 20 members of the Palestinian legislative council rushed from Ramallah to Jerusalem to protest against what they called

a "new settlement" on the plot. By Wednesday, the violence had subsided, but Palestinians vowed to keep up the protests.

The row in the Old City erupted as Newt Gingrich, the American Speaker, was concluding a four-day tour of Israel during which he riled President Clinton's Administration by challenging US policy on the Middle East. On Tuesday, he told Israel's Knesset that Jerusalem should remain united under exclusive Israeli sovereignty.

Mr Gingrich tried to downplay differences with the White House, but his trip here has signalled anything but a unified American voice.

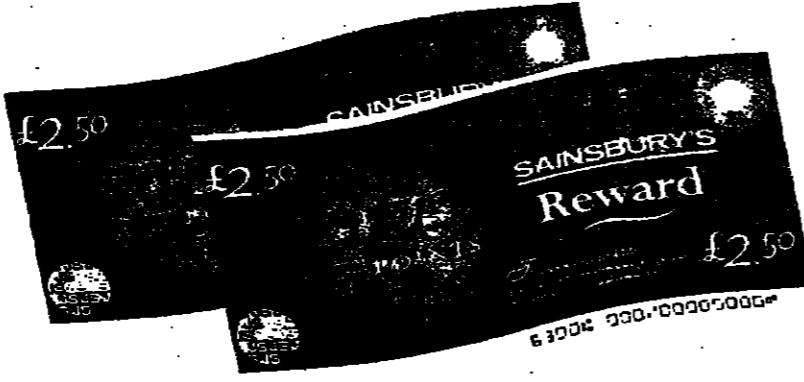
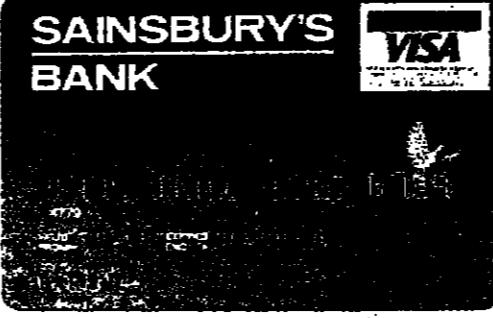
While Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, has been pressuring Israel to withdraw from 13 per cent of the West Bank, Mr Gingrich, echoing most of the US Congress, has repeatedly said that when it comes to "security", Israel must be allowed to make decisions free of pressure.



A Jewish woman carrying a baby through the tin shack settlement erected by the Ateret Cohanim organisation in Jerusalem's Old City. Photograph: AFP

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## FO acts to rescue UK deals in Indonesia

By Richard Lloyd Parry  
in Jakarta

THE FOREIGN Office minister, Derek Fatchett, flew into Jakarta last night amid growing tension over the cancellation of a lucrative business contract involving Thames Water and the family of former president, Suharto.

Mr Fatchett will today become the first foreign government minister to meet with the country's new president, BJ Habibie, who took over the leadership after the sudden resignation of President Suharto a week ago. But his visit, as the personal emissary of Tony Blair, risks being overshadowed by the row over Thames Water,

which recently lost its contract to supply water to half of Jakarta in a joint venture with Sigit Hartjodjanto, eldest son of the disgraced dictator.

Last Saturday, the Jakarta city authorities suspended the deal – said to be worth £225m – claiming that it was awarded because of nepotism after the cancellation of a competitive tender. Today Mr Fatchett will raise the matter with the Indonesian government, amid fears that dozens of other British projects involving the Suharto clan will be jeopardised by the current backlash against the corruption of the former first family.

The nationwide wave of revolt against Mr Suharto, which led to demonstrations, deadly riots and finally forced his resignation, has transformed itself into a growing determination to dismantle the extensive business networks which his family built up during his 32-year reign.

The new energy minister is carrying out an investigation into the Suhartos' domination of Indonesia's huge oil and gas industry. A similar examination

is being made of the family's links with Indonesian co-operatives. The investment minister in Mr Habibie's so-called "reform cabinet" has announced a review of tax breaks granted to relatives and cronies of the former president.

"It will take some time to eliminate corruption and collusion," said HS Dillon, an adviser to the government, yesterday after a meeting with the investment minister, Hamzah Haz. "But whatever can be demonstrated to the public will serve to boost up morale. I would like to see more [contracts cancelled]."

The problem for foreign businessmen in Jakarta is that, for the last three decades, business partnership with a Suharto has been one of the most effective means of making a profit in Indonesia. Last year, after tailing behind Japan, Britain became the biggest foreign investor with commitments of \$5.5bn (£3.4bn) in 31 separate projects. Hundreds of companies, from BP to the Body Shop, have a presence in Indonesia, and many of those have had a leg up from one of Suharto's children or his network of favoured business cronies.

"Last week these companies were going about things the right way," said one indignant British businessman yesterday. "This week everything's changed, and Thames is just the tip of the iceberg. God help all the others who are caught in the middle. How were they to know?"

"On the one hand, you applaud the Indonesian people because they want a more democratic system," said another businessman. "But the timing is terrible, because they've got to restore investor confidence."

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A strange French creature anticipating the eve-of-World-Cup ceremonies in Paris when it will help escort giant football players to the Concorde obelisk. Photograph: Michel Lipchitz

## German nuclear scandal

BONN (Reuters) — The German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, at times scarlet with anger, yesterday vigorously defended his environment minister in an unfolding scandal on contaminated shipments of nuclear waste to reprocessing plants in France and Britain.

"She is not a 'handmaiden' of the industry. She has fulfilled her duties in an outstanding way," he told parliament.

Opposition politicians, who aim to end Germany's reliance on nuclear power, accused Angela Merkel of having been blind to problems with contaminated waste shipments over the past decade because of her commitment to atomic energy.

Both the Social Democrat and ecologist Greens parliamentary groups introduced motions calling for Ms Merkel's resignation, but, with Mr Kohl's coalition controlling a majority in the lower house of parliament, they were rejected.

Mr Kohl said that nuclear power plant operators had made errors, and the government would draw the necessary conclusions.

### IN BRIEF

#### Nazi-era 'traitors' pardoned

BONN (AP) — Germany's major parties have agreed to grant a blanket pardon to hundreds of thousands of Germans deemed wrongfully convicted of treason and other crimes by the Nazis. A law which was expected to pass the lower house yesterday, rehabilitates people, such as resistance fighters and Jews, who were jailed or ordered executed by Nazi courts for political or racist reasons. It also clears the names of some 350,000 men and women forcibly sterilised under the Nazis.

A political compromise over how to treat soldiers who deserted Hitler's army paved the way for the legislation, more than 50 years after the Nazi era ended. Conservatives in Chancellor Helmut Kohl's ruling coalition refused explicit exoneration for about 20,000 deserters who were sentenced to death by Nazi courts. Instead, the bill lifts Nazi convictions imposed for "military reasons".

#### Queen's killers to die

KIGALI (Reuters) — A Rwandan military court has sentenced two people to death and one to life imprisonment for the murder of the country's last Tutsi queen during the 1994 genocide. The verdicts were handed down on Tuesday in Butare, south of Kigali, after two former Rwandan army soldiers and a university professor pleaded guilty to killing the queen and six of her relatives four years earlier. Queen Rosalia Gicanda had survived decades of ethnic strife.

#### Albania peace meeting off

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AP) — Ethnic Albanian negotiators in Kosovo on Wednesday postponed a coming meeting with a Serb government delegation, as both sides reported new incidents in the volatile province.

The Albanians said they could not attend talks scheduled for today in Pristina, because some of their top negotiators would be in the United States with the Kosovo Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova.

# Danes threaten 'No' vote on entry into EU

As Denmark goes to the polls today many fear that integration will end their way of life. By Katherine Butler in Copenhagen

"A MELTING pot," says Karen, a young woman who looks like the Danish supermodel Helena Christensen. Ringing up purchases in one of the stores on Øsorgade, Copenhagen's smartest shopping street, she wrinkles her nose in disapproval. "That's what Europe is turning into. I don't want us to be part of that. It might be selfish but it's the Danish way."

The Danish way threatening to plunge the rest of Europe into crisis again, as voters go to the polls today to decide if they can stomach further integration with Europe, and the exposure to foreign ways they fear will come in its wake.

Denmark's five million citizens live in a highly regulated state where it is common to pay 60 per cent income tax and parents must name their children from an approved list. Yet most Danes share Soren Jensen's view of the lavish welfare system their taxes sustain. "This is a paradise," says the 40-year-old electrician who enjoys six weeks' paid holiday.

But the social model Danes

tenders or others of EU stock. A black face in Copenhagen is a rare sight. Most Danes have no contact with immigrants.

But it is precisely the homogeneity of Danish society and the belief that their system is threat which is feeding unparalleled angst about the nation's borders.

Left-wing opponents of the Amsterdam treaty have distanced themselves from this xenophobia, but left and right have found common ground on the threat Europe poses to the 500-year-old democracy. Danes claim is being smothered as the EU nudges towards political union.

"Here you can knock on any door and get access to the decision makers. You can ring the Prime Minister at home," says Lars Kaaber, of the catch-all anti-treaty June Movement. "If you've been to Brussels you know how thick the doors there are. Our anxiety is about the way

we perceive ourselves and our democracy."

If they approve the treaty — forecasts yesterday suggested the "Yes" lead had narrowed to six per cent — the campaign has highlighted the cultural rift which will keep the EU dilemma raging in Denmark.

When a Danish woman was arrested in New York for leaving her baby outside a restaurant while she ate lunch, Americans applauded the police. But in Danish society, like everyone else, are safe, cushioned by order, regulation and the twin national philosophies of 'jante' which bans anyone from even thinking they are superior to anyone else, and 'bygge' a concept meaning neighbourly.

"Even the bikers have observed a truce for a year," says one diplomat referring to the motorcycle gang wars which have intermittently led to violent killings.

Observers believe Danish euro-scepticism is now more virulent than its British cousin. Feeling they have been tricked into a political project which was sold to them as an economic venture, ordinary people are obsessed with the details of the treaty, as if they were a matter of urgent personal concern.

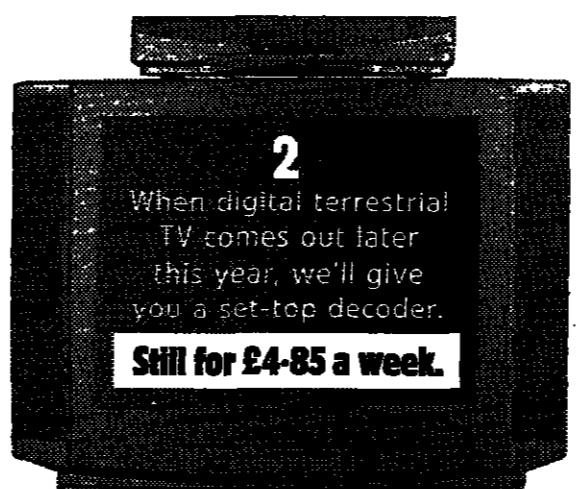
One woman working in a newsagent said she was worried whether Denmark's opt-outs from the Maastricht Treaty were properly protected in the updated version.

Jorgen Schoubye, 33, a taxi driver said he was voting "Yes" but only after subjecting the document to intense scrutiny. "I called up the information office at the parliament for a copy of the treaty. They sent me a whole package which I have been reading, although it is very legalistic."

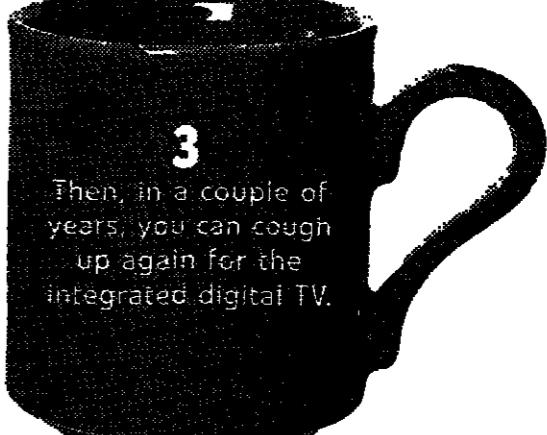
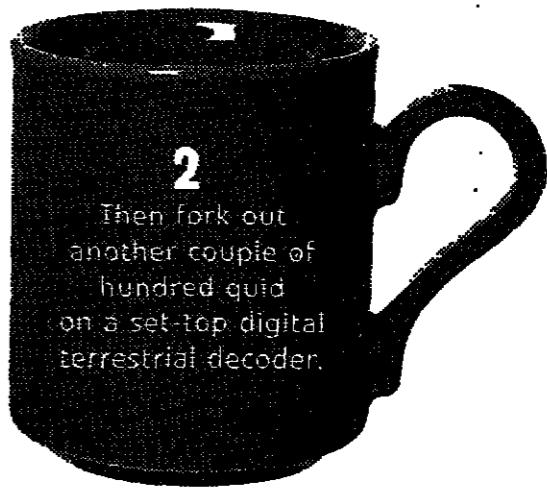
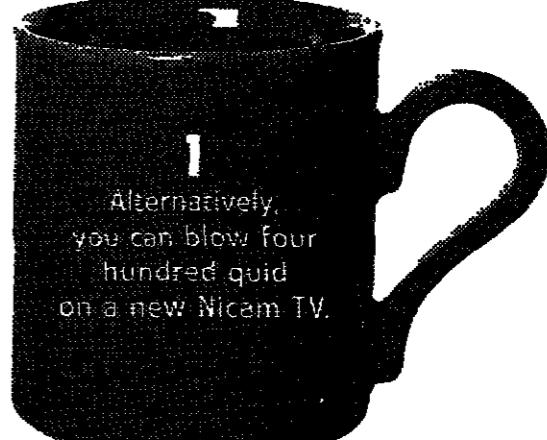
Jan Debel runs his own transport business and will be voting "No". "I'm not saying we should leave the EU but we must pull the brake, we must force them to say where they are leading us", he says.

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# Ortega faces sex abuse case from his stepdaughter

By Phil Davison  
Latin America Correspondent

WHILE Nicaragua's former president, Daniel Ortega, was in New York for UN General Assembly sessions in the Eighties, he regularly forced sex on his teenage stepdaughter in hotel closets, she alleged yesterday.

The stepdaughter, Zoilamerica Narvaez, now 30, made this and a 48-page list of other sexual abuse allegations against Mr Ortega, who is still the leader of the Sandinista Party, at a Managua news conference before filing civil and criminal charges against him in a Managua court.

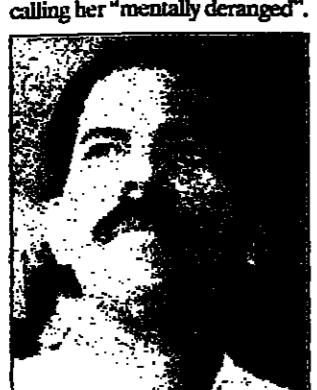
In her affidavit, she said her stepfather pulled her into hotel room clothes cupboards to rape her because he feared the CIA, during the Ronald Reagan era when revolutionary Nicaragua was seen as a thorn in the America's flesh, had planted spy cameras in his hotel rooms. Claiming that having sex with him was her "revolutionary duty, to give him spiritual tranquillity so that he could better fulfil the high obligations thrust upon him by history," the former president often invited a third person to join in, she said.

Even after she was married in 1990, Mr Ortega, now 52 and a father of eight children, would call her for phone sex. Sometimes he insisted on listening on the telephone while she made love with her husband. It was still her "revolutionary duty." He continued making sexual propositions to her until early this year, she said.

In the affidavit, Ms Narvaez, daughter of Mr Ortega's long-time wife, Rosario Murillo, detailed a dozen years of sexual abuse she said began when she was 11, a year before the San-

dinista revolution toppled the Nicaraguan dictator Somoza in 1979.

Mr Ortega, who was re-elected leader of the opposition Sandinistas last weekend, made no immediate comment. However, he has not denied the charges since they were first made, more vaguely, by Mrs Narvaez to the local media in March. At that time she did not intend to press charges but changed her mind after a series of attacks by Sandinista officials calling her "mentally deranged".



Ms Narvaez's biological father - Rosario Murillo's first husband - died when she was a child.

She was raised by her mother and by Mr Ortega. But while the couple travelled the world on state visits, taking the girl along, the Sandinista leader took advantage of his stepdaughter, according to the affidavit.

Rumours had been ripe in Nicaragua for years that Mr Ortega had had sexual relations with Mrs Narvaez, now a mother of two small children. But her charges angered many Sandinistas, to whom Mr Ortega is still the revolutionary hero. Some felt the allegations were part of a political conspiracy against him at a time when the Sandinistas are at a low ebb, having been out of power for eight years.

Mr Ortega lost the last two presidential elections to the right-wing Violeta Chamorro in 1990 and then to current President Arnoldo Aleman in 1996. Despite his recent re-election as the head of the Sandinistas, few believe he would run for president again in the year 2002, even without the sexual abuse allegations.

In the affidavit, Mrs Narvaez said the sexual abuse began when she was 11 and living with Ortega and her mother in guerrilla camps in neighbouring Costa Rica during the final stages of the Sandinista war against Somoza. What began as fondling escalated to rape in 1982 when Mr Ortega was president, she claimed. "He threw me down on the rug, where he not only pawed me but, with aggressive and brusque movements, damaged me. The whole act was forced. It was without my pleasure or consent. This I swear."



Zoilamerica Narvaez telling a Managua press conference of the sex abuse she allegedly received from her stepfather, Daniel Ortega (left). Photograph: AP

## Financial turmoil grips Russia

By Phil Reeves  
in Moscow

RUSSIA tripled interest rates to a staggering 150 per cent yesterday in an attempt to defend the rouble and find an antidote to the wasting disease afflicting its financial markets.

Boris Yeltsin personally joined the battle, by calling an emergency meeting for today with the head of the Central Bank, his new prime minister, and finance minister as a fresh flurry of panic over Russia's economy sent shares tumbling still further.

Rocked by the continuing fall-out from the Asian crisis, depressed oil prices, labour protests and a plethora of other domestic problems - new and old - Russia's woes are proving to be a baptism of fire for

the prime minister, Sergei Kiryenko, a former provincial banker appointed a month ago to stave off alarm from opposition parties.

His problems were compounded this week by the government's failure to sell at auction the state oil company

Rosneft, long hailed as the show piece of the privatisation programme, the model sell-off. Mr Kiryenko had hoped to raise more than \$2bn (£1.25bn) for the gaping state coffers by selling a 75 per cent stake. He decided to press ahead in spite of complaints from potential buyers that the starting price was too high, given world oil prices.

It was a resounding flop.

The leading expected con-

testants, which include con-

sorcia containing BP and Royal

Dutch/Shell, stayed away. No one bid, forcing the Kremlin back to the drawing board. A new auction date will be set on Monday, but the government has cut the opening price to \$1.7bn.

Mr Yeltsin countered by signing an "austerity plan", cooked up by Mr Kiryenko, to slash government spending by \$10bn - 12 per cent of the 1998 budget. Although a proportion of the cuts were a foregone conclusion, as the government never had a hope of raising the tax revenue to fund them, some will be real.

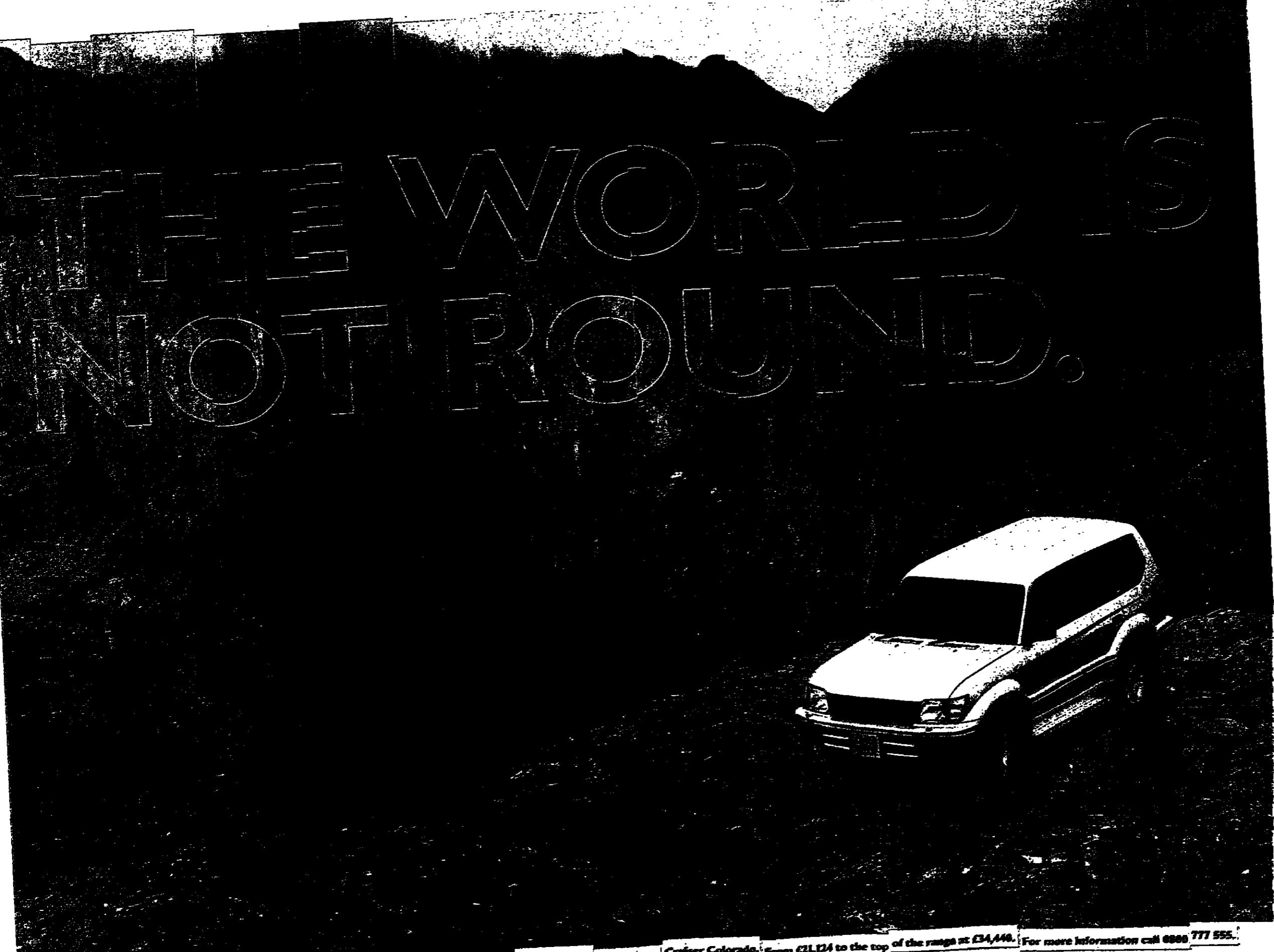
The country is already echoing with the clamour of victims of market transition - from angry miners (fresh from 10 days of blockading the railway system) unpaid pensioners and forgotten scientists, to a crum-

pling army, and workers in a tottering education and health system. However, the president's move was welcomed by the International Monetary Fund, which has dispatched a senior official to Moscow today.

The fund is still mulling over the release of the next \$670m tranche of a \$9.2bn loan agreed in 1996.

Matters were not helped by rumours in Moscow that, after pumping reserves into propping it up, the government will dilute the hitherto stable rouble - sacrificing one of the Yeltsin administration's triumphs in the difficult transition to a market economy.

Mr Kiryenko yesterday reiterated his determination to defend the currency, as interest rates rose to their highest level since February 1996. It re-



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# Catholic martyr still a thorn in Pakistan's side

A bishop's suicide has pushed Christians on the sub-Continent to campaign against blasphemy laws. Peter Popham reports

THREE weeks after the event, the shock waves caused by the suicide of Pakistan's most prominent and outspoken Catholic bishop, Dr John Joseph, are still reverberating. On Sunday a large crowd of Indian Christians, protesting against the infamous blasphemy law that prompted the bishop's death, tried to break through the border into Pakistan at Wagah, north-west India. The US State Department has voiced its indignation at the killing of Dr Joseph, and has called for an immediate investigation. The killing has also caused a stir in the Muslim world, with the leader of the Ahl-e-Sunnat, Muhammad Akram, that his religion was right and Muhammad's was wrong. He then invited the Muslims to go with him to Karachi to peruse the book written by "Sulman Rushadi", whereupon they would realise that their religion was false and the Holy Prophet a liar. "Exasperated", the petition goes on, "the complainant grappled with Ayyub Masih" and the latter was then handed over to the police.

Department has voiced its indignation. And in a move that would have pleased the bishop, Pakistan's churches have, since his death, for the first time decided to campaign together against the law.

John Joseph, the tall, lean, 65-year-old cleric who was one of the first native Pakistanis to be consecrated a bishop, shot himself through the temple on December 12, 1972, in Rawalpindi. He had been under pressure from the police to give evidence against Ayyub.

According to Ayyub, the entire case was a fabrication, cooked up between his family's landlord, a relative of a man in the local police department, and the complainant and witnesses, who were given a large financial inducement to testify. The motive: to force Ayyub's and the other Christian families to leave the area.

himself through the temple on the steps of the sessions court in the town of Sabiwal in West Punjab on the evening of Wednesday 6 May. According to Patras Samuel, the bishop's driver who was only yards away at the time, and who was the first person to reach the body - "Blood was spurting everywhere... I was crying" - the

where... I was crying" — the bishop died almost at once. None of John Joseph's close colleagues are in any doubt as to why he died: to bring pressure to bear on the government to repeal a pernicious law which has already resulted in the deaths through lynching of six people, including a High Court

took him to the police station. At the same time, the mob started attacking our house, firing guns, throwing stones, trying to set it on fire. We had lived peacefully in the village for 40 years, but one hour after Ayyub was stoned we ran away from the village with just what we stood up in." Since then, their house and property have been burned, and the other 15 Christian families have fled as well.



### **Joseph: Wanted his suicide to publicise blasphemy law**

judge. The law in question is section 295(C) of the Pakistan Penal Code, promulgated by the dictator Zia ul Haq in 1986. It is a simple enough statute: "Whoever ... directly or indirectly defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ... shall be punished with death, or imprisonment for life".

The defilement can be merely spoken; all that is required for a conviction is one complainant, and one witness. Although life

and one witness. Although life imprisonment is an option, judges have so far preferred to pass death sentences. None of these has yet been carried out, and some have been overturned by higher courts, but since 1990 Muslim fanatics have taken it upon themselves to murder five people either accused or convicted under the statute, and one

victed under the statute, and the High Court judge who overturned a lower court's blasphemy conviction.

The story that culminated in Bishop Joseph's death began in October 1996. Ayyub Masih, a 25-year-old Christian, lived with his Christian family in an overwhelmingly Muslim village in the country outside the town of Sahiwal. He was the first person in his family to become literate, passing his Matriculation Exam in 1996. By trade he was

lays something will happen.

And he was not just saying this to Ayyub Masih's mother: John Joseph was telling the world at large. In a document he sent to Rome, read out there the day before his death, he said: "I shall count myself fortunate if in this mission of breaking barriers, our Lord receives the sacrifice of my blood for the benefit of his people."

His fellow Catholics in Pakistan heard his words but did not realise how deeply he meant

The allegation has a farcical quality. On 14 October, according to the prosecution, Ayyub was sitting in the street outside his house when three Muslims happened-by. Ayyub, it is alleged, told one of them, "Exam in 1996. By trade he was a mason."

Reasons now deeply acrimonious, they. Today they are still trying to come to terms with the implications. Ayyub Masih's death sentence has not been overturned, but his mother says: "I am not upset about Ayyub - I have many sons. I am upset because we will not get our bishop back."



Policemen chasing mourners who were demonstrating outside the house of the late Bishop John Joseph, in Faisalabad earlier this month

Photograph: KM Chaudhry/AP

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Table 1. Summary of the main results. **1.1.1.5. Some reservations and**

**VISION EXPRESS**  
THE REVOLUTION IN SIGHT



# How it really feels to be fifty

Cher thinks it sucks. Is she letting the side down, or being refreshingly honest? Bel Mooney and some fellow fiftysomethings come clean

EVER since she arrived for one of the Osca ceremonies wearing a cobweb-dress in which she looked witchy and magnificent, I have had a sneaking admiration for Cher. Her hippy-headband *I Got You Babe* youth was my youth, her determination to transform herself from singer into actress had an echo in my own life (journalism to novels), yet the bravado which poured her into that dress in her forties was like the unquenchable vanity which lured me into leather jeans. Now, when she says in an interview in *People* magazine "I hate my fifties. They suck. I never felt older until I hit fifty." I find myself applauding her honesty.

Helen Mirren, Goldie Hawn, Julie Christie and other iconic glamorous women have all stated they do not mind the advent of the fifties; indeed, I have written it myself. When I reached my 50th birthday (a long 18 months ago) I celebrated the fact with two long, reflective articles in a national newspaper – and everything I said at the time I meant "...I don't want to be 30 again. Not with the fire in me now." That sentiment was admirable if only for realism, let alone optimism and independence. Ah, but the mirror is a source of grief some days. What once seemed (speaks vanity) bewitching, and could wear the witchy with style, now looks, in some lights, straightforwardly like a witch. And like Cher, I hate that.

When I read her words I went to the bathroom and (since such honesty is catching) wiped my face from above the ears to see what it would be like to lose the smile lines that have sagged. There is no philosophy in the world which can save me from this. I am a creature of the 1950s culture which put teenage girls into girdles, and "set" hair into waves and curls worthy of middle-aged women. I was brought up to think that appearance matters, and cannot understand how a close friend (exactly my age) can "allow" her hair to winter into great swathes of white. When once, inspecting my new red-brown, she asked, "Don't you want to grow old gracefully?", my reply was blunt: "Sod that!"

Yet at the same time, I despise this obsession. When (wearing my hat of children's

author) I visit schools, I am appalled to hear from head teachers of the increase in eating disorders in teenage girls, as well as the terrible general anxieties about looks that can make the lives of even primary children a misery.

When I note that fashion and beauty take up far more space in newspapers than 10 years ago, on the grounds that thus female readers will be attracted, I disapprove and yearn nostalgically (another sign of middle-age) for the days when I was a young journalist and this was the stuff of women's magazines. For me, the hysteria after the death of the Princess of Wales was no more, or less, than the canonisation of the clothes horse-horse: a fitting symbol for our appearance-obsessed era.

Of course, ageing matters all the more when (like Cher) your life depends on good looks. Even those who are not locked in that particular prison may feel sad (as I do) that they will never backpack around India, or ride pillion on a Harley, across the States. "I want, I want," cries the child inside the middle-aged person, and no amount of common sense will quieten those little wistful means, or quell the jumping up to windows impossibly high.

The desperate assertions that being 50 is great, that ageing does not matter, fail to convince – even when uttered by someone as intelligent as Helen Mirren. Is that not to enter a state of denial which only serves to postpone the moment of horror? To admit that you hate getting older is the first stage towards dealing with it, and constructing a philosophical acceptance which will scaffold you far more surely than make-up or a facelift. The morning comes – and you may be 45, or 60 – when you realise that you are not as young as you feel but as old as you are. You have boarded the moving staircase and are being carried inexorably towards the grave – and all your scrabbling, and running backwards, and whoops of devil-may-care, cannot put you back again at the top where you were.

This is the dark note that runs through the interview with Cher. What is most interesting is that it seems to have been sparked off by the death of her ex-husband,



Bel Mooney: 'I find myself applauding Cher's honesty'

Photographs: Geoff Wilkinson/Rex, Neville Elder

**Karine Vander  
gucht, 58,  
florist**  
"It took me seven  
years to accept I  
was in my fifties.  
At first I hated it.  
Even men in my  
own age group  
weren't interested  
in me because they thought I was too old.  
I've now got a partner who is five years  
older than me and things have settled  
down. But the sex I have now is definitely  
different than when I was in my forties."

**Carole Tibbles,  
52, clerical  
assistant**  
"I never wanted  
to be 50 and I  
was really  
annoyed when  
my partner  
threw a surprise  
party for me on  
my birthday. I don't think I'm ever going  
to accept that I'm in my fifties. I like to  
dress as young as I feel and I don't think I  
act my age. If I had the money I would  
consider plastic surgery."

**Janice McEvoy,  
51, secretary**  
"I've always gone  
for older men,  
my present  
partner is 25  
years older than  
me. So I really  
didn't mind  
turning 50. I feel  
more confident now because I have been  
around for a bit. I think you get to know  
yourself better. I certainly feel  
comfortable with the way I look. I'm less  
critical of myself than in the past."

**Karen Proto,  
54, retired**  
"My life didn't  
really change  
when I was 50.  
The radical shift  
came when I was  
in my forties,  
when my  
children reached  
adulthood. When they grew up, my  
husband and I had the freedom to spend  
the year sailing around the world in our  
yacht. It's a fairly physical thing, but I  
don't seem to have any less energy."

Interviews: Nicole Veash

more books in me, but it does not particularly bother me if I write them, or take up painting again, or do the garden.

I tiptoe towards age with a husband of 30 years' standing, glad that the impulses of wild youth did not drive him away. With a son of 24 and a daughter of 18 who are a far greater achievement than backpacking across India. With parents and in-laws I love, and with dear friends with whom I share a conversation until death. Music, painting, sculpture, books and the fields and trees and wildflowers outside my window matter to me now far more than they did when I was 30. I am overwhelmed with richness, and yet I am not afraid of the day when I have to give them up, and enter the darkness. Or the light.

the dying: knowing that each day, in the flaking of your skin, and the beating of your heart, you are waning as surely as you were once waxing – and therefore there is no time to waste. I think about death each day of my life: it is in the "Mexican Day of the Dead" skulls that litter my study. And I find them good company.

The hardest thing is to convince people that this is not morbid. On the contrary, it is a reminder that behind the face in the mirror is a spirit, and now is the time to realise that things of the spirit have to be allowed their space. Beauty and sexuality – wicked and deceptive things that caused me much trouble – are hard to lose, but I love what I have brought along the way, without reinvention. I know there are many

Sonny Bono; as if, with the loss of the man she had fought with for years, she suddenly looked in the mirror and saw what TS Eliot called "the skull beneath the skin". The most significant quote in the whole interview is this: "I know it sounds weird but how bad, how hard, can dying be? I figure it's all right because he's done it and if he can do it I can do it. I just feel a little less anxious, a bit more comforted about being dead."

A few days after her 50th birthday George Eliot wrote to a friend: "...I have a deep sense of change within and of a permanently closer companionship with death." Another of my heroines, Simone de Beauvoir, wrote that at 50 she "seemed to have crossed a frontier", and yet at the

same time, the truth of being older "remains foreign to me". Having expressed this universal paradox she goes on (*In All Said and Done*) to say: "I no longer feel the haunting anxiety of death that was so very strong in my youth. I have given up rebelling against it. The idea of my end is with me. Beneath my feet there stretches a road; behind me it emerges from the darkness and in front of me it plunges into the night."

That sense of brevity concentrates the mind most wonderfully, and is a good reason to look in the mirror with open eyes. Good advice to the middle-aged often involves "re-inventing yourself", yet again there is something desperate about seeking new roles, new selves. Perhaps the bravest thing to do is to accept the role of

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## Understanding his anger might end your holiday hell

### DILEMMAS



### VIRGINIA IRONSIDE

Daphne's husband has asked his mother along for a few days of a fortnight's holiday out of a sense of duty.

Daphne finds her inane wittering washes over her as she's good at heart, but her husband is constantly irritated, behaves rudely and makes faces behind her back. Daphne finds the situation stressful. What can she do?

We have all heard stories of people's ghastly mothers or fathers and when we've met them have found them to be unfriendly, sweet, courteous, intelligent and charming. What we, and Daphne, fail to take into account is how they behaved as parents. One friend of mine was beaten mercilessly with a leather strap and locked into cupboards by her alcoholic mother. She hates her. And yet out of a curious sense of duty, she continues to see much of her, putting herself under constant stress.

How, for instance, could one ever forgive a mother who had sent one away to boarding school, miserable and trying to hide one's tears? Or a father who had been totally disinterested in us as children? What is more interesting is why adult children find it so difficult to express their hatred against their parents and often try to hide it from both their parents and themselves, by keeping in constant touch, often under the guise of that frightful word, "duty".

His attitude seemed to be utterly understandable. This woman had betrayed him, and he wanted to hurt her as much as possible in return. Not very charitable, perhaps, but at least he was open and didn't low-low to her for the rest of his life out of a sense of duty. Interestingly, since the incident, he and his mother were getting on far better than they ever had done before.

If Daphne's husband could be persuaded to talk about his childhood and perhaps get in touch with some of the anger he feels about his mother, and then, acknowledging it, put it in the past where it belongs, he might be persuaded to treat her in a more civilised way. If he's unable to do this, he should see far less of his mother and certainly not ask her on holiday. Or perhaps the woman treats him like a child, even though he's an adult. No wonder he behaves like one in response.

Parents don't have a right to love and respect. They have to earn it like everyone else. Similarly giving a child enough to eat and enough clothes to cover him is not enough. Yes, we certainly owe a duty to our parents if they suddenly become old and

cranky due to age and illness. But not if they have behaved unfeelingly to us in the past. This, I suspect, is Daphne's husband's problem and perhaps Daphne could be a bit more charitable to his moods while, without criticising him, persuading him that these holiday visits are pointless unless he can resolve his rage and behave in a more civil manner.

### READERS' REPLIES

There are many milestones on the road to maturity. Some of us think we've reached adulthood when we've completed our education, or married or taken out our first mortgage. All these are useful markers on our journey, but learning how to be adults towards our own parents seems to be one of the most difficult milestones to achieve.

My sisters and I spent many young adult years complaining about our mother and comparing examples of her irritating behaviour. Of course, this attitude was obvious in the way we spoke to her and treated her.

Eventually, moaning with my sisters became a bit of a bore and I understood that treating my mother badly said much more about me than it did about her. Finally, I made the decision to treat her with the same courtesy I would show to anyone else.

Looking back on it, this seems like an important milestone, the point when I became

an adult, separate and more or less equal to my mother. I imagine she had already seen me this way for years, but it wasn't really true until I could see myself this way.

Daphne's husband is behaving like an adolescent and needs some encouragement to take the next step on that road to maturity.

Priscilla Plock, London WB

Daphne's husband is acting like a petulant brat. The most likely reason for his rudeness to her is that he's embarrassed by her and finds her immensely irritating. His disrespect for her is his way of dissociating himself from her, telling the world that she may be his mother but she makes him cringe.

This is the way stupid children behave when their parents *irk them, throwing tantrums* because Daddy wouldn't buy them a BMW for their 18th. I'm sure he wouldn't dream of being so ill mannered and churlish towards colleagues that annoy him. He's lucky to have a mother whose worst crime is inane wittering.

Leyla Sonai, Glasgow

Duty should not be forgotten when it comes to the elderly, who need help and to feel loved, but should be kept within bounds. I personally feel that sacrificing several days of a fortnight's holiday is too much, but they may be stuck with it this year. Could they go on a holiday next year which the mother would not enjoy and, in advance, arrange a special treat to compensate?

Margaret Brown, Sevenoaks

### NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

Dear Virginia, I have a small spare room in my flat and because I am very lonely I have considered letting it out to a lodger. We'd have to share the kitchen and bathroom.

I'd be really interested to know what the pros and cons are, and whether there are any pitfalls. Do you or your readers think it would be a good idea? — Connie

Letters are welcome, and everyone who has a suggestion quoted will be sent a bouquet from Interflora.

Send comments and suggestions to Virginia Ironside, Features Department, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL (fax 0171-293 2182), by Tuesday morning. If you have a dilemma of your own that you would like to share, please let me know.

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## Farmers must go to the market

IMAGINE. The chairman of the British Phonographic Recording Association demands to see the Prime Minister. A press conference is summoned, to hear complaints about persisting French subsidies to Johnny Hallyday. The Government, it is asserted, has a moral obligation to support record producers and studios. What nonsense, we would say. Here is a self-interested group trying to suborn tax payments and buck consumer trends. Why can't they make a living in the market, like the rest of us?

Yesterday farmers were at something similar, bleating like a spring lamb. Farm incomes have been falling. BSE has struck hard at livestock farmers. The last year has confirmed the way agriculture has been shrinking as an employer and as a proportion of national product; taken as a whole the leisure industries do indeed bulk larger.

We live (at least in the West) in a world awash in food. Self-sufficiency is an anachronistic notion. Trees and housing head the long list of alternative uses of land currently used – often enough abused – for arable and pastoral production. The British farming industry could continue shrinking (a decline which, oddly, has not shown through in land prices) and consumers would not feel a thing – except lower prices. As for rural employment, it depends less and less on farming, and Labour has bright ideas on how to diversify.

So why should not market logic apply to this sector, as it has – mercilessly – to steel, coal and financial services? It is true that the countryside occupies a special place in the national psyche. Our economic destiny is urban but our identity and imagination feed off the idea of a deep, green and pleasant England, with its Welsh and Scottish variants. The trouble with farmers is that they have too often proved the worst enemy of that idealised countryside; they spray it, chop it down, pollute it. Townspeople are more solicitous, as ramblers, visitors and taxpayers.

Over the years farmers have sought to exempt themselves from modernity by exercising their peculiar leverage on the right of politics. They have used it to fend off market forces which in other contexts the right approved of. It is one of the marks of the Conservative Party's present confused discontents that its leaders cannot see a germ of contradiction here. European agricultural support remains a cesspit. Farmers do have a case on beef – for swifter acceptance by the European Commission that monitoring procedures have improved, and a swifter timetable for reintroducing British beef exports. Groups in distress, such as the hill farmers of the Welsh and English uplands, deserve sympathy. For the rest, the Government should treat farmers for what they are: another interest group with a keen appetite for the contents of the public trough.

## Blair unleashes the party heresy-hunters

LONG BEFORE he was elected leader of the Labour Party, Tony Blair was at the forefront of plans to introduce democracy into its mechanisms. So successful has he been that it is barely credible today that as recently as 1993 the trade unions controlled almost 90 per cent of conference votes, and the idea of one member, one vote provoked heated debate. Yet it seems from his latest plan that Mr Blair, champion of party democracy, believed one thing when it suited him and another now that he is in control.

On Tuesday, the party's national executive committee approved a system under which the Chief Whip will notify each MP's constituency party of their member's voting record – in particular, "unauthorised absences" and occasions when he or she has voted against the Government. The official explanation is that this will enable party members to identify those MPs with a poor attendance record when it comes to reselection. Perhaps. But you do not have to be Machiavelli to recognise the not-so-light touch of Blairite centralisation at work once again. Does anyone really imagine that this is other than an attempt to identify heretics – those souls who are not fully sold on the Blairite project?

This is of a piece with the expected refusal of the NEC to allow Ken Livingstone's name to go forward into any selection contest for the party's candidate for Mayor of London. Democracy means that sometimes the result is inconvenient. You cannot pick and choose the results.

Meanwhile, the much-pilloried public services minister, David Clark, has come up with a rather more sensible plan for yearly reports. His proposal that each Commons select committee takes annual evidence from its relevant ministers on their progress over the past year and plans for the next, and that they offer marks out of ten, is precisely the sort of thing New Labour should be about. It smacks of a genuine attempt at openness and at demystifying the mechanics of government.

The leadership's desire to run a well-oiled machine is admirable. Labour's old habits were not admirable; they were chaotic. But there is a fine line between sensible discipline and rigid, unthinking control.

## Good pay, poor play

ACCORDING TO a survey in next month's *Cricketer* magazine, the traditionally impoverished professional cricketer is no more. As a result of the game's television deal, some £60m is being pumped into the counties and into players' pockets. Although this season's £50,000 average salary for capped players would not even pay for a week of Alan Shearer, it marks a rise of 35 per cent over 1995 levels. Cricket appears to have adopted a special type of performance-related pay where the more you are paid, the worse you perform. When England players were mainly amateurs they regularly beat the world. Today they are well rewarded, and can boast one win in the past seven one-day matches.



### Emperor and PoWs

Sir: I was appalled by the courtesy to the Queen and her guest, Emperor Akihito of Japan. Arthur Titherington, chairman of the Japanese Labour Camps Survivors' Association, who has been given almost unlimited coverage to express his opinions, does not speak for all Far East prisoners of war.

I also worked on the Thai-Burma railway, at Sonkurai, where 1,200 out of 1,600 were dead within three months. I agreed to take part in an escape attempt to let the outside world know how prisoner worked and died. I am now the only survivor of any such attempt from Thailand. Five died on our escape. After being taken for execution, but saved by the intervention of Colonel Cyril Wild, I was sentenced to eight years' penal servitude in Outram Road jail.

I still have nightmares, but these are not caused by the present or immediate past generation of Japanese. We have reached a time, finally, to forgive, even though it is impossible to forget. The future is all-important.

JAMES BRADLEY  
Winchester

Sir: As a Japanese national who has lived in Britain for over 17 years I was surprised by Tony Blair's statement regarding the PoW problem. It is sad that economic necessity has overruled the suffering that the PoWs and internees experienced. However, it is equally sad that the British right-wing media has hijacked the PoW issue and used it as a stick to beat Japan.

Neither country can take the moral high ground: Japan because of the atrocities committed by its soldiers during and before the Second World War, and Britain because of its poor record in Ireland, India and China during the years of the British Empire.

The real crime in this affair is the crime of nationalism. Japan was a poor country at the beginning of the 20th century and was desperate to catch up with Western nations. It utilised nationalism and imperialism as tools to achieve industrialisation,

a process which brutalised the common Japanese worker, who was forced to work extremely hard for minimum reward and in the harshest of conditions. The Emperor was used as an icon to concentrate the spiritual energy of the nation, to justify the hardship and also the plundering of other nations. The pathological atrocities perpetrated by the Japanese soldiers illustrate the intensity of this totalitarian regime, under which the Japanese people also suffered.

Why not call it quits and forget it? Because those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it. The way forward for Japan is to start teaching the young people in school exactly what went on during the war. They are being extremely complacent by not doing so. We cannot turn a new leaf without coming to terms with the past.

TOKUKO HASHIMOTO  
Editor  
Eikoku News Digest  
London E2

Sir: As a war veteran myself, one of whose school chums was tortured and beheaded by his Japanese captors for the "crime" of attempting to defend his country against a ruthless invading army described by Sir Donald Maitland (letter, 25 May) as "brave and skilful" (a plaudit equally applicable to the Nazi SS), I have a confession to make.

I don't hate the Japanese, some 80 per cent of whom were either born after the war, or too late to take any part in it. But I have little time either for those who concealed their best war record for so long from their own children, and who think that saying "sorry" somehow heals the shattered lives and bodies of our miserably recompensed heroes who stood against them, and whom we now treat so shamefully.

LEN CLARKE  
Uxbridge, Middlesex

Sir: As a student of uniform, I tend to clip all pictures of people wearing them for my files. But today (27 May) I do not intend to keep your front page picture, as I do not wish to embarrass members of the Royal Corps of Signals by preserving an image of the display of shocking bad manners by one of their number.

MEGAN C ROBERTSON  
Crewe, Cheshire

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HUGO MORRIS  
Barton Mills, Suffolk

Sir: Do not be too hard on Viagra; it may yet prove the salvation of the rhinoceros.

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR  
London N19

## LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number  
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

### Voices of prejudice

Sir: I travelled from Australia specifically to attend the protest against the Japanese Emperor. My uncle died in a PoW camp in 1943. According to his pals who survived he was treated inhumanely. As I am his closest living relative, I feel duty-bound to represent what I believe he would do were he able. I am not driven by a desire for "blood-money". A simply apology would suffice.

JOE O'BRIEN  
Milton, Greater Manchester

Sir: I have every sympathy for the experiences endured by the former PoWs. However, the Japanese government has already apologised, which Emperor Akihito cannot do because of his constitutional position. During the Queen's visit to Punjab last year, no apology was made for the Amritsar massacre.

BALRAJ SINGH GILL  
Slough, Berkshire

Sir: The vast majority of people in Japan today were not even born until after the atrocities. If we are to hold people responsible for their ancestors' crimes, then we, the British people, will spend the best part of the rest of our lives apologising. I don't accept responsibility for the slave trade or any of the countless crimes committed by British citizens under the banner of imperialism.

CHRISTOPHER WRIGHT  
Reading, Berkshire

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Sir: We would like the Norwegians to apologise for being too good at cricket and rugby.

The Australians would like to apologise for thinking that Terry Venables could get them into the football World Cup finals.

We would like the Russians to apologise for making a hash of Communism.

The Russians would like to apologise for having failed to realise, during the years of Communism, that Mafia methods represented the true way forward all along.

We would like the Swedes to apologise for Abba.

The Swedes would like to apologise for Abba.

We would like the Israelis to apologise for going on and on about the Holocaust while hypocritically treating the Palestinians as an inferior race whose land they can steal at will.

The Israelis would like to apologise for pretending to be in Europe and stealing the Eurovision Song Contest as well, and they're welcome.

### Cars vs trains

Sir: Your leading article of 25 May ("Who wants to get on the bus?") appears to fall into the trap of being based on "commonly held assumptions" unsubstantiated by research.

The point of us commissioning the MORI poll you refer to was to expose what people are actually thinking and saying, not what commentators assume they are thinking and saying. So when you say John Prescott should realise that his policy "may not be quite as popular with the voters as it is made out to be", which research sources are you quoting?

The poll found 90 per cent of people were unlikely to change their voting pattern if the Government introduced restrictions on cars entering cities, and 25 per cent would actually be more likely to vote for the Government if they did this. Only 6 per cent were less likely to vote for the Government.

The poll showed the importance of understanding what people are really saying: for example, it found 75 per cent would oppose motoring charges if they went to the Treasury – and yet 71 per cent would support the same charges if the money went to public transport.

DAVID CAMPBELL BANNERMAN  
Communications Director  
Association of Train Operating Companies  
London NW1

Sir: John Muldoon's call for the return of litter bins on the London Underground (Letters, 27 May) is likely to go unanswered.

London Underground managers have told me privately that they are reluctant to bring back litter bins because there is no evidence that they contribute to making stations tidier. Without them, most people tend to put their sweet wrappers and dirty tissues in their pockets and handbags. According to this theory, those who drop their rubbish on the platform would do so anyway, litter bins or not. And, of course, London Underground saves millions on the expense of emptying the bins and disposing of their contents.

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR  
London N19

We would like the Norwegians to apologise for being boring.

The Norwegians would like to apologise for getting to the South Pole first.

We would like the Chinese to apologise for there being so many of them.

The Chinese would like to apologise for many things, but not while anyone from the West is listening.

We would like the Belgians to apologise for there not being six famous Belgians.

The Belgians would like to say, "Not six famous Belgians? We are very sorry, but haven't you heard of René Magritte? George Simenon? Django Reinhardt? Adolphe Sax? Eddie Merckx? And, um, let's think – ah, Jacques Brel! Pshaw! Glad you didn't want seven famous Belgians..."

Full list of global apologies on request. Just send blank cheque.

## A national apology? Of course. Where would you like us to start?



MILES  
KINGTON

WE ALL seem to want Japan to apologise for war crimes, but why is it only Japan that is expected to feel sorry for anything? Has Britain nothing to apologise for? Shouldn't Britain feel sorry for occupying so much of the East in the first place? We didn't go into Burma, for instance, at the invitation of the Burmese – we fought, shot and killed our way in there. But did we ever say sorry to the people of Burma?

Did we ever say sorry to the Irish for what Cromwell (and a lot of others) did?

No, of course we didn't. And if we did, we wouldn't mean it. Like children, we say sorry with our fingers crossed behind our backs.

So, in order to diffuse the blame a bit, I have tabulated a brief round-the-world summary of what we would like a few countries to apologise for, and what those countries would REALLY like to apologise for.

We would like the Japanese to say they are sorry for the cruelty that was practised

on prisoners of war in World War II.

The Japanese would like to say that what they are really sorry about is that they did not win World War II. Still, the way Japanese history is being rewritten in Japanese schools, it is going to look pretty soon as if they did win World War II, which they really did actually, if only on an economic level.

Sorry about that ...

We would like the French to say sorry for being so arrogant and refusing to understand us even when we try to speak French.

The French would like to say how sorry they are that French, which is an infinitely superior language to English and used to be the universal language of diplomats and gentlemen, has been replaced by the clumsy Anglo-Saxon tongue which, by sheer accident, has been adopted by the barbaric Americans, who can never think of any good film ideas of their own but are always re-

making French films very badly, *ah, ces créatifs américains* ...

We would like the Germans to apologise for making up for a couple of world wars by always sneaking lucky victories against the English in football.

The Germans would like to apologise for nothing.

We would like the Americans to apologise for inflicting McDonalds on the rest of the world, or, failing that, at least to apologise for Disney turning so many good European stories (Pinocchio, Hercules, etc) into the same American junk culture, or, at the very least, for sending all the worst aspects of American culture abroad, and keeping all the very best at home.

The Americans would like to apologise for having rescued Europe in two world wars and gotten nothing but ingratitude in return, and they won't be making that mistake again.

We would like the Australians to apo-

logise for being too good at cricket and rugby.

The Australians would like to apologise for thinking that Terry Venables could get them into the football World Cup finals.

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## If you want them to say sorry don't ask their government



RUPERT CORNWELL

ONCE MORE THE apology season is upon us. An American President who apologised for medical experiments upon unknowing blacks has now apologised – well, almost apologised – for slavery. A British Prime Minister has apologised for the 19th-century Potato Famine in Ireland.

Some Australians (with the notable exception of their government) have just apologised to the Aborigines. And the Japanese have almost, but not quite, apologised for their horrific treatment of captured British war prisoners in the camps of South-East Asia.

But what can these formal acts of contrition achieve? And, beyond an inner-glow of self-righteousness and short-term political expediency, the answer, one must reluctantly conclude, is: nothing.

The apology, official and unofficial, is part of our confessional age. Admit the sin and it will be expunged from your record; the past will be set to right and sweet reason will prevail. Confess to guilt over the Potato Famine today, and over Bloody Sunday tomorrow, and the way will be eased towards a settlement in Ireland.

Would that it were so simple, that unpleasant events could be wished away, airbrushed from the collective memory like Trotsky or Bukharin from a Soviet photograph of Lenin. Alas, apologies by governments, however well-intentioned, cannot do that, for the past is part of our present.

The divisions of Ireland and the brutalities visited upon British POWs on the other side of the world offer a common lesson: If apology and forgiveness are to mean anything, they must be at the level of the individual.

How inconvenient that must be for Tony Blair, so irritated by our national obsession with the past. Indeed, he must have reflected on the irony of the monarch of his future-oriented kingdom bestowing the Order of the Garter upon her guest, thus using mediaeval mumbo-jumbo to pour petrol on the flames of a controversy our Prime Minister devoutly wishes would disappear in the higher interests of trade, mutual affection and prosperity for all.

But just as only the capacity of the individual inhabitants of Northern Ireland to forgive the outrages visited upon their families and communities by their foes can turn the Good Friday settlement into a permanent peace, so it must be for the veterans and their captors to find their own accommodation.

Anything less would be akin to the eyeslowered handshake of apology wrung from a boy found guilty of schoolyard bullying – a grudging truce that makes it no less likely he will pick the very same fight the next week.

And, you might ask, if Japan must seek a pardon, should we escape censure? This politics of gesture could continue ad infinitum.

teetering between political correctness and downright absurdity.

If the Potato Famine, slavery and the treatment of British prisoners in South-East Asia, then why not public contrition to Wales for being forced into the Union, to Scotland for Culloden, indeed, to every country subjected to the attentions of Britannia Imperatrix?

After all, the soldiers were stationed in Asia 55 years ago to protect an empire imposed, unsought and unwanted, upon native populations reduced to second-class citizens in their own land. Have we apologised for that?

Perhaps, official remorse has been expressed. But in the hearts of individual British people – in other words the national subconscious – the Empire remains a source of pride not shame. No formulation of words from our rulers will make the slightest difference.

But it will be asked, what of the Germans? After all, they have apologised, and have we not made our peace with them? Indeed, we have, but not, I would argue, as a result of any formal statements on the part of the German government (and these have been legion), nor because of the huge sum paid by Bonn to the compensation victims of the Nazi regime.

No, the decisive element has been the visible sorrow and sense of guilt of individual Germans – a trauma whose collective legacy is a country to this day scarred of its own shadow.

When Chancellor Willy Brandt fell to his knees in 1970 before the monument to the

victims of the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw, and when President Richard von Weizsäcker delivered his famous speech of national expiation, asking why everyone went about their usual business as “the trains which rolled in the night” carried the innocent to the death camps, both men were expressing not just their

**The most fitting atonement for wars is to ensure they never occur again – deeds not words**

country's anguish but their own. *Nie wieder – Never Again* – is not a hollow slogan, but the deepest wish of almost every German. If Japan's post-war behaviour is a guide, it is the deepest wish of the Japanese people, too. The proof of repentance lies in deeds, not words.

The most fitting atonement for war and its savagery is to ensure they never occur again. The two most bellicose of this century's powers have become its most pacific. Regret, sorrow, pain, contrition... it matters not which infinitely calibrated choice of words finally passes the lips of the Emperor or his government.

I would be the last to make light of the unspeakable sufferings of those veterans who turned their backs on the Emperor along the Mall and burned his country's flag. For the former prisoners who can forgive, I have boundless admiration. For those who cannot, I have equally boundless understanding.

How would I react in similar circumstances? Having never been put to such a trial, I simply do not know. What I do know, however, is that the apology and the forgiveness which count are those freely arrived at between individuals, between he who inflicted misery and he who endured it.

Anything less would be akin to the eyeslowered handshake of apology wrung from a boy found guilty of schoolyard bullying – a grudging truce that makes it no less likely he will pick the very same fight the next week.

And, you might ask, if Japan must seek a pardon, should we escape censure? This politics of gesture could continue ad infinitum.

## Pagans and the craggy home of the playboy of the western world



JOHN WALSH

I went to the Aran Islands the other day, those three strips of flat limestone and patchwork-quilt fields off the west coast of Ireland. Fans of *Father Ted* will be familiar with the smallest island, Inisheer, because it doubles as Craggy Island in the aerial credit sequence, but otherwise the Arans remain a mysterious presence on the Atlantic coast – beyond civilisation, beyond the stone wilderness of Connemara, a place off the scale when it comes to elemental wildness.

I'd gone there in the footsteps of John Millington Synge, the Irish playwright, who first set foot on the Arans in May 1898. According to literary myth, he was told to go there by WB Yeats, when the two men met in Paris two years earlier – to go and “express a life that has never found expression”.

He landed on Inisheer (“the big island”) on 10 May, but found it a boring ordinary fishing port, albeit with a dramatic medieval stone fort perched on a 300ft cliff. After two weeks, he headed for Inishmaan (“the middle island”) and stayed for two months, taking in a brief excursion to Inisheer (“the small island”) at the end.

And from this unpromising terrain of stony field and storm-lashed beach, he invented Anglo-Irish drama.

Is that pitching it too high? Certainly, from listening to the locals' conversation (and that of the servant girls through the floorboards of his room) and rendering it into English while keeping its Celtic rhythm, he found the melancholic, meandering but passionate voice that became the sound of Irish drama this century, from *The Playboy of the Western World* to Martin McDonagh's *Leenane Trilogy*, which is currently knocking 'em dead on Broadway.

What he found was a small community of fishing people and subsistence farmers, who spoke Gaelic and loved news, and for whom pagan gods and spirits and fairies were real, everyday things. It must have been like discovering magical realism walking towards him on a windy beach.

He wrote about their clothes, especially the red petticoats of the women and the waistcoats and calf-skin shoes (“pampooties”) of the men, which had to be soaked in water every night to soften their hides. He hung out with the girls on the beach (they admired his enormous camera and his handsome moustache) and played his violin for the



oldsters in the pub. The locals asked him about the progress of the Spanish-American war and bragged about their fame abroad.

Because most of the strangers they met were philologists, the islanders concluded that most Europeans were fixated on their tongue. “Believe me,” one man assured Synge, “there are few rich men now in the world who are not studying the Gaelic.”

And if he were alive now, and went to see the place? On Inishmaan, a horrible pink neon sign announces a nearby B'n'B and there is a ramshackle burger shack on the beach. But the modern world hasn't treated the place too badly.

Paddy Crowe, who plies the local ferry between the islands and the Clare mainland, carries a mobile phone and calls his boat “The Happy Hooker”. His wife Sean makes coffee from a Krups espresso machine in her super-modern kitchen. Their children are bilingual, but speak Irish at break-time in the 32-class school.

There are four ponies and traps, three cars, three pubs and no crime. The grocer's shop sells loose nails, potato farls, lamp oil and a biography of Sean O'Casey, but your more sophisticated requirements (prosciutto, capers, the *Independent*) must be ordered from Galway and sent by ferry.

Inishmaan, where Synge spent the most time, is bleaker, stonier, hillier and more savage than its neighbours, and its population is dwindling.

The last recorded “pampootie” was worn in 1988, and the elderly Aran ladies don't wear red petticoats any more; instead they process grandly past you in full black skirts and shawls crocheted in umpteen primary colours.

There is just one pub, known to all as “The Pub”, where the landlord is Padraig Sean Brian – his second and third Christian names being the names of his grandfather and father, a kind of grid-reference on the map of island relationships and descendants.

Surnames are pretty irrelevant anyway, since everyone you meet is a Faherty, a Concely or a McDonagh, just as they were in Synge's time.

I found the cottage where he stayed, four summers running. It is fantastically dilapidated, but they plan to restore it this year, to offer guided tours, serve visitors tea and cakes and allow aspiring writers a room in which to compose.

Otherwise, Inishmaan is winding down. Twenty years ago, there were 250 souls; now there are 171. There are only 16 children in the school. “I don't see much future for the island,” said one born-and-bred Inishmaanite. “People will disappear, or else they'll grow up, leave and not come back.”

What they dread most is not becoming a ghost island, but of being overrun by Europeans, as Achill has been overrun by Germans.

As you stand on the hillside by the stone “seat” Synge built 100 years ago, and look at the gorgeous view – the scrubbed lines of dry-stone wall, the tiny green

John Millington Synge (left), the inventor of Anglo-Irish drama  
Photograph: Trinity College Dublin/Penguin Books

fields above, the smooth playing-fields of rock below, the far Homeric Cliffs of Moher – you think: It's time another *Playboy* appeared, to save this outcrop of the western world from extinction.

The national hostility that hangs like a shroud over the Japanese emperor's visit has surprised many people.

Why (they ask) the toxic animosity about the Japanese war record? Why, do we find it so hard to forgive the Japanese the Burma-Siam Railway? More to the point, why is it not just the military veterans who still bear a grudge against the Yellow Peril, but a younger (male) generation in their forties and fifties who never took part in the conflict?

The reason may be found in the anti-Japanese iconography of the comics we read in the late Fifties – where the guards always wore shorts and granny spectacles and waved Samurai swords around and yelled “Aaaaiiee! You die, British dog” when crossed by the brave Allied prisoners. But it can be located more pungently in a single book.

It was called *The Knights of Bushido* by Lord Russell of Liverpool. It was a small paperback that every schoolboy of my generation remembers, for it was passed from hand to hand in playground and locker room like a nasty variant of the *Kama Sutra*.

And there was, indeed, something a wee bit perverse about its lovingly detailed, close-up descriptions of Japanese war crimes, complete with grotesque pictures of emaciated bodies being brutalised and tortured.

Like a basic primer of cruelty, it offered to our astonished eyes a glimpse of how inventively sadistic human beings could be with each other, using nothing more elaborate than a water hose, a handful of rice seeds and a length of barbed wire.

Lord Russell, a First World War soldier and lawyer turned military prosecutor, also wrote *The Scourge of the Swastika*, a companion volume about Nazi war crimes – but that wasn't nearly as gory and we didn't bother with it.

Every literate male fortysomething I've spoken to remembers the *Bushido* volume and how soiled they felt after only dipping into it.

I'm certain it embedded a gene of Nippophobia in our hearts, inextricably entwined with our first stirrings of sado-masochism.

## Piracy is a threat, but the Internet is the performer's best friend



WENDY GROSSMAN

could be badly damaged without a legal framework.

Now it has become possible to download CD-quality music from Websites, music publishers are following in the footsteps of law enforcement, print publishers, and governments in demanding regulation to mitigate their fear of losing control.

Speaking as a former internationally obscure folk singer, it's pretty galling to see a huge, gaudy industry notorious for ripping off its artists pleading that there will be no incentive to invest in new work if the Internet isn't regulated now.

EMI made £307m in profits last year, compare that to the £40m the industry estimates it is losing to piracy.

While it is true that the many small record labels would be far

more seriously damaged if piracy runs out of control, we all know perfectly well that any money clawed back from regulating Internet download won't go to those small companies. It will go to the big players: them that has, gets.

The Internet does not need special regulation in order to stop piracy. It is already clearly illegal to sell bootlegged copies of copyrighted works; the precise nature of the distribution mechanism is irrelevant.

Requiring Internet service providers and telecommunications companies to act as copyright police is still more inappropriate. British Music Rights have singled out Web-based fan sites, some of which have offered unreleased concert recordings or studio out-takes.

I'm more sympathetic on

this last point, since artists only have the right to control the first recording of their songs (after that, issuing a licence to another artist to cover the song is automatic), and publication on the Web might easily jeopardise that right.

But can there be any sight more graceless than last year's demands from Oasis's management that Web-site owners take down all copyrighted material (photos, videos, song clips, lyrics)? A distinction has to be made between a for-profit bootleg operation and a fan site.

Copyright law is commonly thought of as existing to give creative artists the chance to profit from their work so that they can afford to go on being creative artists. But it has a balancing purpose, too, which is to

give the public fair access to that work.

The fair use doctrine, which permits things like quoting from books and articles for the purpose of review, parody, or comment, does not apply to music. The use of the tiniest portion of a tune may be subject to legal action, even though though through history traditionally quoted from each other's work much the way book authors do.

If we are going to revise the copyright laws for the digital era, I believe fair use should be applied to music – and film, TV, and video, too.

The music industry has more reason than most to be scared of the Internet. Not only does the Net offer a low-cost distribution mechanism (albeit without the luxurious

cover art), but it makes it easier for independent bands to develop a following and by-pass traditional record companies entirely.

But music publishers could, if they chose, see the Internet as an opportunity to build closer relationships between bands and Britain's 6m Web users. They could learn to use the unique qualities of the Net to sell products that would have been uneconomic before, such as niche artistes, scraps of music too short for radio play but suitable for Windows start-up noises, or custom recordings personalised lyrics.

Unfortunately, British Music Rights has done the equivalent of declaring war on the Net. Not the best marketing strategy for a new millennium, I'd have thought.

## PANDORA

### Chill out

ANYBODY who has seen Tim Roth acting in *Reservoir Dogs* or his latest film, *Liar*, has to respect the man's intensity. But if you have the kind of energy Roth has, it's evidently not all that easy to switch it off.

Last night in the Groucho, Roth was having a beer with friends. One celebrity-watcher noticed not only was the Hollywood star chewing gum but he was smoking at the same time.

### Peace on earth

ONE OF the bitterest feuds of the Nineties is clearly over. Their out-of-court settlement was announced months ago by Harrods owner, Mohamed Al Fayed, and Condé Nast, publishers of *Vanity Fair*, the celebrity

and investigative magazine which ran an unfaltering profile of the Egyptian.

While the Knightsbridge shop is once again placing ads in Condé Nast publications, the ultimate sign of peace came a few days ago. Condé Nast has won a hotly contested battle with National Magazines to produce Harrods' Christmas catalogue.

### Dead end

EVERYONE was anxious to leave for last week's parliamentary recess but a debate on the Common Agricultural Policy detained many of them.

Pandora has great sympathy for Jean Corston, MP for Bristol East, whose adjournment debate came as the last piece of business on the agenda, the so-called “graveyard slot”. The title of her debate? “Arnos Vale Cemetery”.

## Have you left anyone out of your Will?

Give your pet a home for life by leaving a legacy to The Blue Cross

Do you worry about what would happen to your pet if you were no longer there? By leaving a legacy to The Blue Cross, you can help us give your companion food, shelter, kindness and cuddles for the rest of his life.

Every year, The Blue Cross rescue thousands of homeless pets. We look after them all until loving, new homes can be found, no matter how long it takes – that's a promise.

If you would like us to care for your best friend when you're gone, return the coupon below to find out more about making a legacy to The Blue Cross.

Protect your pet's future – find out more about remembering The Blue Cross in your Will.

Please send me a FREE advice booklet on making a Will and leaving a legacy to The Blue Cross.

## John Coiley

JOHN COILEY was a man distinguished by great courtesy and an encyclopedic and scholarly knowledge of railways. In his 17 years in charge of the National Railway Museum in York, the museum achieved a stature and authority without precedent in the fields of railway history and preservation. But it was his personal qualities that characterised his administration and inspired profound affection and respect among colleagues and friends as well as those of the wider public who came to appreciate and benefit from his achievements.

Colley was born in 1932 and educated at Beckenham and Penge Grammar School and Selwyn College, Cambridge, where he obtained his BA and later a PhD in metallurgy. His early career was with the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, at Harwell, followed by a period in industry as a development manager. Recruited in 1973 to the Science Museum in London, he presided over the crucial stages in the setting up of the new railway museum in York. He brought with him a life-long interest in and knowledge of railways and arrived in the museum as the York initiative was beginning to take shape.

The National Railway Museum resulted directly from the 1968 Transport Act which established that the British Railways Board should transfer responsibility for its outstanding historic railway collection to the Department of Education and Science, which is that context meant the Science Museum.

After prolonged deliberation on the future location of the collection, the Minister, Jennie Lee, in the debate on the Bill on 5 December 1968, said that, "to have one really first-class

Additional premises were

acquired, notably the Railway Goods Depot across Leeman Road. By the mid-1980s plans were well advanced for its opening, thereby almost doubling the size of the museum, when serious structural problems were encountered with the concrete roof of the original hall.

A major programme was launched to replace the roof, but the core of the National Railway Collection stayed on public display throughout these works by the transfer of material to two transport exhibitions, one in York and one in Swindon. Coiley guided the museum through these turbulent affairs with quiet authority to enjoy the accolade in 1991 of the National Railway Museum

gaining the Museum of the Year Award.

Within the railway community, Coiley's name was linked inescapably with that of the National Railway Museum. Wherever the museum was involved, his courtesy and considerate presence impressed itself. All who came into contact with him felt that they had made a new friend, both of Coiley and of the museum. One result was that for those who harboured an interest in railways the museum was "theirs" in a manner unknown in most other fields.

Colley retired in January 1992, on the eve of the next stage of expansion, leaving behind a museum which was by then the most significant in its

field anywhere in the world. Although finances were becoming overstretched, under Coiley's careful management the museum had been able to develop its photographic archives and pictorial collections, sustain a programme of conservation of locomotives and rolling stock and expand its programme of loans to other museums throughout the country.

To coincide with his retirement group of his friends and colleagues wrote and edited a Festschrift, *Perspectives on Railway History and Interpretation*, as a mark of the high regard in which they held him.

The growing international status of the museum had been reflected in Colley's contribution

to the International Association of Transport Museums. After his retirement, his devotion to the museum continued through his vigorous support for the Friends of the National Railway Museum. He was an honoured guest at the 21st anniversary dinner of the Friends just a few days before his untimely death from a heart attack at Chur, Switzerland, where, characteristically, he was leading a group exploring the delights of alpine railways.

John Colley's gentle manner masked a great sense of fun. He was an accomplished photographer, a lover of fast cars and sometimes rally driver but his real achievement was to ensure that in the country of origin of the railway as we know it, there

should be a national museum of stature in which its history, technology and contemporary practice could be properly portrayed.

Neil Cossens

John Arthur Colley, museum curator, born 29 March 1932; Scientific Officer, UKAEA, Harwell 1957-60; Scientific Officer, AEA Laboratories, Egham 1960-65; Development Manager, Fulmer Research Laboratories 1965-73; Assistant Keeper, Science Museum 1973-74; Keeper, National Railway Museum, York 1974-92; Member of the Board, International Association of Transport Museums 1977-91; President 1983-86; Vice-President 1986-91; married 1956 Patsy Dixon (two sons, one daughter); died Chur, Switzerland 22 May 1998.



Colley in 1992 at the National Railway Museum, York, after 17 years at its helm

Photograph: Yorkshire Evening Press

## Gene Raymond

AN ACTOR who had a long career in film, television and theatre, Gene Raymond will nevertheless be best remembered as the husband of the singing star Jeanette MacDonald. Though Raymond made over 40 films, his career never equalled his wife's in stature.

Blond and dashing hand-some, he was a capable leading man in many movies, but tended to play second-leads in the really big ones - he was Mary Astor's cuckolded husband in the Gable-Harlow *Red Dust* (1932) and third billed to Robert Montgomery and Carole Lombard in Hitchcock's *Mr and Mrs Smith* (1941).

One of the biggest hits in which he starred, *Flying Down to Rio* (1933), is notable more for the first teaming of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, in supporting roles. The actor's most fondly remembered film is *Smile Through* (1941), the only time he played opposite his wife.

Born Raymond Guion in New York City in 1908 and educated at the Professional Children's School, he made his theatrical debut at the age of five and had his first Broadway

role at the age of 12. By the time he was 21 he had played major roles in five Broadway shows, including *Cradle Snatchers* (1925), in which young Humphrey Bogart was the juvenile lead.

He was billed under his real name in all these shows, but Paramount rechristened him Gene Raymond in 1931 when they brought him out to Hollywood. His first two films, *Personal Maid* (1931), with Nancy Carroll, and *Ladies of the Big House* (1931), with Sylvia Sidney, set a pattern in which he was frequently overshadowed by strong leading ladies.

In *Ann Carver's Profession* (1933) he was the weakling husband of a lawyer (Fay Wray), who ends up defending him for murder; in *Brief Moment* (1933) a rich loafer reformed by the love of nightclub singer Carole Lombard, and he was also teamed with Bette Davis in *Ex-Lady* (1933) and Barbara Stanwyck in both *The Woman in Red* (1934) and the featherweight comedy *The Bride Walks Out* (1936).

Among his best films were the lyrical, beautifully photographed *Zoo in Budapest* (1933), in which he displayed a rarey tapped sensitivity as an animal-loving young man who lives in the zoo where he works and falls in love with a runaway wif (Loretta Young) hiding there, and two films with Ann Sothern, the perky musical *Hoony for Love* (1935) and a comedy *The Smartest Girl in Town* (1936).

He also wrote several songs for his wife to perform on her concert tours. He returned to films with the thankless role of an ageing actor trying to seduce Jane Powell in the musical *Hit the Deck* (1957), but had a good role in the fine political drama written by Gore Vidal and directed by Franklin Schaffner, *The Best Man* (1964).

In 1967, as a colonel in the Air Force Reserve, he flew jets into South Vietnam on high-priority missions and won the Legion of Merit. His last film credit came in 1969 when he provided the Voice of Death in the western *Five Bloody Graves*.

Apart from an occasional character role on television he concentrated during his final years on his investments and business interests. Always involved in the affairs of the industry, he was at various times a board mem-

ber of the Screen Actors Guild and Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, president of the Motion Picture and Television Fund, president of the Los Angeles chapter of the Air Force Association and vice president of the Arthritis Foundation.

He married Jeanette MacDonald in 1937 (her famous co-star Nelson Eddy sang "O Promise Me" at their wedding)

and he was at her bedside when she died in 1965, her last words allegedly being "I love you".

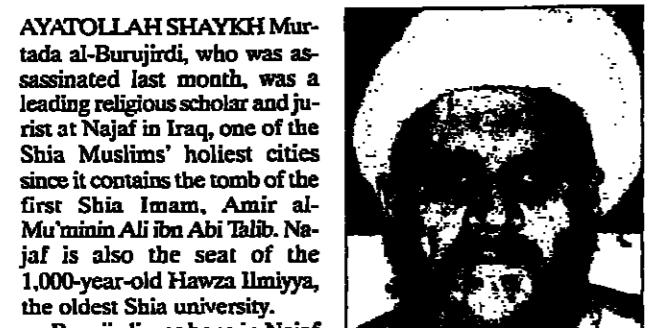
Raymond married a second

time in 1974 and was widowed again in 1995.

Tom Vallance

Raymond Guion (Gene Raymond), actor, born New York 2 August 1908; twice married; died Los Angeles 3 May 1998.

## Ayatollah Shaykh Murtada al-Burujirdi



Burujirdi: marja

tada had done his intermediate studies under his father, but at the advanced level his principal teacher was the great jurist Ayatollah Abu-Qasim al-Khoi. During this period, while still attending Khoi's lectures, Bu-

rujirdi became a *mujtahid* (qualified to make independent judicial decisions), and taught at the Hawza. This was a feature of academic life at Najaf, where the most competent pupils of the leading ulama (religious scholars) were also teachers and scholars in their own right.

He published a 10-volume work which comprised detailed notes, complete with his annotations and comments, of Khoi's lectures on the monumental work of jurisprudence *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa* by Sayyid Muhammad al-Burujirdi.

In 1991, after the Shia uprising in southern Iraq, Burujirdi was imprisoned along with 70 other ulama but was released after three days. It had been his custom to say his daily prayers in the Rawda, the sacred en-

closure of Imam Ali. The imam - the leader of the congregational prayers - Sayyid Muhammad Ridha al-Khalqali had also been put in prison, but since he was not released Burujirdi was appointed in his place.

The Baathist government, aware of the awe and esteem in which the Shia ulama were held by the people, had in the late spring of 1994 closed the Khadra Mosque in Najaf where Ayatollah Ali Seestani, today the principal *marja* in Iraq, was imam, on the pretext that essential repairs had to be carried out. They now asked Burujirdi to give up his post at the Rawda of Imam Ali. He refused vehemently.

Two years ago he was beaten up and a little over a year ago an attempt was made on his life when a hand-grenade was thrown at him. He suffered injuries to his legs and had to remain at home for two months. He still would not give up leading the prayers, however, although thereafter he never went to the Rawda alone.

What exacerbated matters even further was Burujirdi's decision to gain recognition as a *marja* and the subsequent publication, last year, of his own collection of fatwas, his *risala al-awaliya*, in two volumes: Ayatollah Seestani had been virtually under house arrest for more than three years and the government was bent on promoting its own candidate Sayyid Muhammad al-Sadr (who is prepared to co-operate with it but who lacks the credentials for being a *marja*) as a rival to Seestani.

The spectacle of Burujirdi as

passers-by were injured, as he walked back home from the Rawda after the evening prayers.

Next morning there was a funeral procession to the Rawda in which hundreds of people took part and there Ayatollah Sayyid Radhi al-Marashi led the ritual funeral prayer over the deceased. Then the coffin was swiftly taken off in a car by security officers in the cemetery of Wadi al-Salam where the body was buried in haste with only Burujirdi's son, Shaykh Mahdi, and the grave diggers allowed to be present.

A. B. D. R. Eagle

Murtada al-Burujirdi, religious scholar, jurist and imam; born Najaf, Iraq 1931; married Shawkat bint Mirza Ali al-Na'ini (one son, three daughters); died Najaf 21 April 1998.

## DEATHS

JEWELL: Peter Arundel, on 23 May 1998. Much loved by all his family. Funeral at Fen Ditton Parish Church, Cambridge, Monday 1 June, 3.30pm. Flowers to Cambridge Funeral Services, 617 Newmarket Road, Cambridge.

MCNAUL: On 24 May 1998, peacefully, after a brief illness, Dr Charles McNaul, aged 83. Dearly loved husband, brother, father, stepfather and grandfather. Funeral service on Monday 1 June at 12.30pm at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Primrose Hill, NW3, followed by private cremation. Flowers or donations, if desired, to Save the Children Fund.

## BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

ANNOUNCEMENTS for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS may be telephoned to 0171-393 2002 (24-hour answering machine 0171-291 2011) or faxed to 0171-293 2000, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). Dr Ashok Kumar MP, 42; Professor

## Birthdays

Professor John Alderson, former chief constable, Devon and Cornwall Police, 75; Mr Alan McDonald, former chairman, Woolwich Building Society, 73; Sir Patrick McNair-Wilson, former MP, 69; Mr Frank Middlemass, actor, 75; Sir Philip Onions, a Lord Justice of Appeal, 65; Lord Renton of Mount Harry, former government minister, 81; Sir Edward du Cann, former chairman of Loughs, 66; Dr Charles Samuarez Smith, director, National Portrait Gallery, 44; Mr Wolfgang Schneiderhan, violinist, 83; Sir Edward Seaga, former prime minister of Jamaica, 68; Mr Julian Slade, composer, 68; Mr Richard Van Allan, operatic bass and director, 63; Sir Gordon Wolstenholme, physician, 88.

## Anniversaries

George Ligeti, composer, 75; Mr Alan McDonald, former chairman, Woolwich Building Society, 73; Sir Patrick McNair-Wilson, former MP, 69; Mr Frank Middlemass, actor, 75; Sir Philip Onions, a Lord Justice of Appeal, 65; Lord Renton of Mount Harry, former government minister, 81; Sir Edward du Cann, former chairman of Loughs, 66; Dr Charles Samuarez Smith, director, National Portrait Gallery, 44; Mr Wolfgang Schneiderhan, violinist, 83; Sir Edward Seaga, former prime minister of Jamaica, 68; Mr Julian Slade, composer, 68; Mr Richard Van Allan, operatic bass and director, 63; Sir Gordon Wolstenholme, physician, 88.

## ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

Birth: William Pitt the Younger, statesman, 1759; Jan Lancaster Fleming, writer and creator of "James Bond", 1908. Deaths: Jan van der Meer (Jan Vermeer van Haarlem the Younger), painter, buried 1705; Anne Boleyn, novelist, 1549; Edward, Duke of Windsor, 1972; Eric Morecambe (Eric Barstow), comedian, 1984. On this day: the Zuider Zee became an inland lake (at the IJsselmeer) after the dyke was built connecting North Holland with Friesland, 1932; the Orient Express train, Paris-Bucharest, ceased running after 78 years, 1961. Today is the Feast Day of St Germanus of Paris, St Ignatius of Antioch, St Justus of Urgel, St Senator of Milan and St William of Gellone.

## John Nabarro

A celebration for the life and work of Sir John Nabarro KB FRCP will be held in the Library of the Royal College of Physicians of London, 11 St Andrews Place, Regent's Park, London NW1, on Monday 22 June 1998 at 4pm. Further information may be obtained from the College Secretary.

## ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh will be entertained by the Emperor and Empress of Japan at the Imperial Palace, Tokyo, on 11 June. The Queen and The Duke will attend the opening ceremony of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's new lifeboat, the *Alacrity*, at Dover, Kent. The Queen and The Duke will be entertained by the Emperor and Empress of Japan at the Imperial Palace, Tokyo, on 11 June. The Queen and The Duke will attend the opening ceremony of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's new lifeboat, the *Alacrity*, at Dover, Kent. The Queen and The Duke will be entertained by the Emperor and Empress of Japan at the Imperial Palace, Tokyo, on 11 June. The Queen and The Duke will attend the opening ceremony of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's new lifeboat, the *Alacrity*, at Dover, Kent. The Queen and The Duke will be entertained by the Emperor and Empress of Japan at the Imperial Palace, Tokyo, on 11 June. 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# Stocks tumble across the globe

By Lea Paterson  
in London  
and Stephen Vines  
in Hong Kong

STOCK MARKETS the world over took a tumble yesterday amid growing concerns over the impact of the Asian crisis on corporate earnings.

The UK's blue-chip FTSE 100 index fell by over 100 points, knocking nearly £20bn from the value of the country's largest companies.

"It looks as if Asia could cause world economic slowdown," said Trevor Greetham, global strategist at Merrill Lynch.

Negative market sentiment began on Tuesday in New York, where the Dow Jones finished down 150 points amid jitters over blue-chip corporate earnings. Stocks slid further when the Far East markets opened for business with Hong Kong — now predicted to enter recession for the first time since 1985 — worst hit.

Hong Kong's blue chip Hang Seng Index tumbled below the psychologically important 9,000 mark as share prices fell by 5.3 per cent, or 498 points.

When London opened for business yesterday morning, shares fell by more than 95 points — about 1.5 per cent — in the first 30 minutes. The FTSE continued to fall, touching an all-day low of 5,836.9 in mid-afternoon, before recouping some of its earlier losses and finishing at 5,870.2, down 100.5 points, or 1.7 per cent.

Companies with significant Asian concerns were affected most. HSBC, the banking giant which owns the UK's Midland Bank, was one of the worst hit. HSBC finished the day at 1,531p, down over 100p. Standard Chartered, the London-based international banking group, finished down 40.5p at 772p.

Wall Street was sharply lower — down around 100 points at lunchtime yesterday, while the US bond market was generally higher.

Mr Greetham said: "Bond markets are doing well, and equity markets are suffering. That is usually a sign that the world economy is contracting."

In Hong Kong, where traders were poised for further falls today, investors were taken aback by a statement made by Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's chief executive, on Tuesday night. Mr Chee-hwa



An investor watches screens in Hong Kong as the markets slump yesterday

the previous week by Sir Donald Tsang in which he insisted that he had no data to support a lowering of the government's 3.5 per cent economic growth estimate for 1998. However first quarter economic growth figures will be released tomorrow which could show that the economy has gone into recession for the first time since 1985.

Yesterday Sir Donald said: "We already had a very rough last quarter in the end of 1997, we are having a very rough quarter in the first part of 1998 as well — we have to face up to these realities."

The government's economic growth forecasts are now entirely out of line with almost all private sector estimates. Yesterday HSBC Securities low-

ered its 1998 growth forecast from 2 to 1 per cent. Two finance houses, J.P.Morgan and Daiwa, are already forecasting negative growth. The OECD predicts that the economy will expand by no more than 0.9 per cent. Even the most optimistic forecast, from Bank of America, is 0.5 per cent lower than the official figure.

On top of the gloom about economic growth figures, pessimism was fuelled in Hong Kong by the release of retail sales figures for March showing a 13 per cent downturn as unemployment rose to a 14-year high of 3.9 per cent.

Meanwhile, in the all important property market which underpins the stock exchange, there were indications of a further slump in business when fig-

ures were released showing a near 19 per cent fall in property loans. Transactions in the property market have slumped to a ten year low. Anthony Cheung, HSBC Securities chief economist, said that hopes for an improved economic performance in the second half of the year were based on revised activity across the border in mainland China.

Investors were also depressed by other news from the region where Korea entered a two day general strike in protest at lay-offs, uncertainty over Indonesia continued and the Japanese Yen continued to fall, closing in the Far East as 137.7 to the United States dollar. Japanese stock prices were also down by 1.4 per cent at 15,664.29.

Sterling finished the day at DM2,905, up from 2,898 on Tuesday. Mr King, a "hawk" who voted for a rate rise at April's MPC meeting, said domestic inflation was "significantly higher than RPIX inflation" (the measure of inflation targeted by the Government). Mr King warned: "Inflation will start to rise above the target unless domestically generated inflation declines".

He added: "The earnings figures released earlier this month — which showed that average earnings in the economy grew by 4.9 per cent and in the private sector by no less than 5.6 per cent — were undoubtedly disappointing. To hit the inflation target those rates of

## Three win £32m in Game

By Nigel Cope  
Associate City Editor

THREE entrepreneurial brothers will share £32.8m when Game, the computer software retailer, comes to the market next month, after the company's shares were priced at the top end of expectations. The trio, led by chairman Neil Taylor who co-founded Game in 1990, will sell around half of their existing 48.6 per cent stake. They will retain a 22.65 per cent stake, worth £33.5m.

"We won't have a large bingo but we might have a small one," Mr Taylor said.

"We will certainly have some sort of celebration."

The float continues a remarkable run of entrepreneurial success for the three Taylor brothers, whose father David was managing director



Nick Warren-Smith, Game finance director, Paul Lloyd-Roach, chief executive, and Neil Taylor, chairman, celebrate their fortune outside one of their company's stores

of the Tozer Kelmsley and Millbourn motor dealership group in the 1970s.

While Neil, 37, has been running Game, his 40-year-old brother Carey has been running the Metropolis recording studio in Chiswick, London. The studio is used by many top artists, including George Michael, who recorded his *Listen Without Prejudice* album there. The oldest brother, 43-year-old Chris, is no slouch

either. He co-runs a company called Origin Products which designs toys for many of the world's top toy manufacturers such as Mattel, Disney and Hasbro.

"We didn't have any money to start off with. We all made our own way," says Mr Taylor.

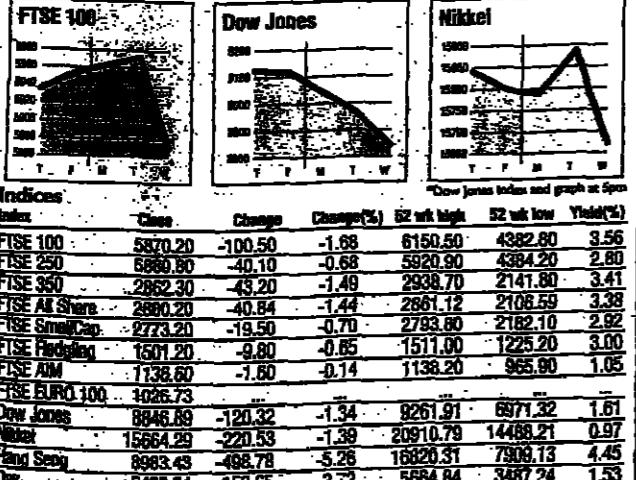
Game's shares were priced at 200p yesterday, valuing the business at £148m. Game has identified 150 towns which could support a Game outlet.

The shares start trading on 3 June.

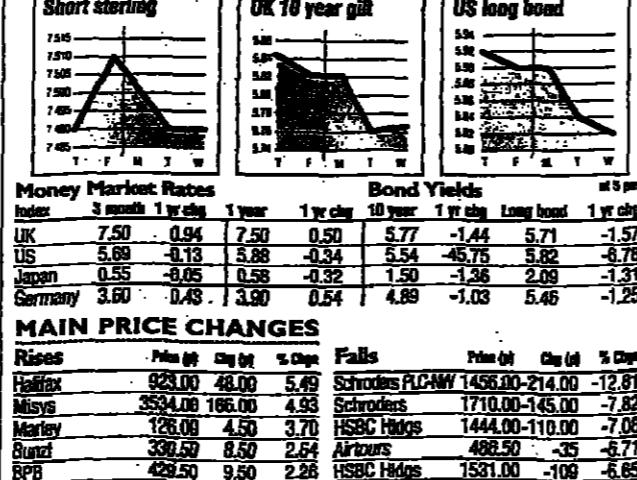
Investment column, page 24

Yesterday in the markets

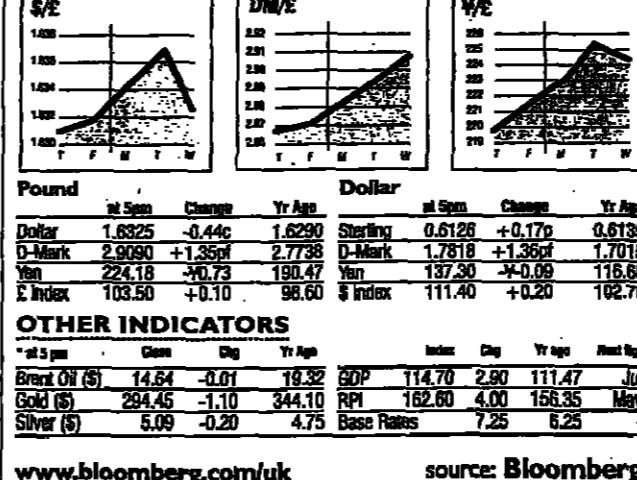
### STOCK MARKETS



### INTEREST RATES



### CURRENCIES



### OTHER INDICATORS

Rises Falls

Source: Bloomberg

## Sterling strengthens on fears of rate rise

By Michael Harrison  
and Les Paterson

THE RECENT spate of weakness in sterling appeared to be drawing to an end yesterday as growing City interest rate fears pushed the pound above DM2.90.

Hawkish comments from a member of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) coupled with a perceived weakening of the CBI's "the next move should be down" stance on rates re-awakened fears of an interest rate hike following next week's MPC meeting.

After a weak start, the pound gained almost a pence against the mark following a speech by Mervyn King, the Bank's chief economist and executive director, at the Building Societies annual conference.

Sterling finished the day at DM2,905, up from 2,898 on Tuesday.

Mr King, a "hawk" who voted for a rate rise at April's MPC meeting, said domestic inflation was "significantly higher than RPIX inflation" (the measure of inflation targeted by the Government).

Mr King warned: "Inflation will start to rise above the target unless domestically generated inflation declines".

He added: "The earnings figures released earlier this month — which showed that average earnings in the economy grew by 4.9 per cent and in the private sector by no less than 5.6 per cent — were undoubtedly disappointing. To hit the inflation target those rates of

earnings growth will have to fall back."

Mr King said that even though the MPC predicted a slowdown in the economy, it might not be sufficient in itself to hold back inflation.

Meanwhile, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) indicated a slight softening over its stance on interest rates by warning that the country could not afford to trade "short-term gain for long-term pain".

Addressing the organisation's annual dinner in London last night, the CBI president Sir Colin Marshall called on the Government not to ease up in the fight against inflation.

He also gave a rare acknowledgement that the strong pound, while hurting manufacturers, exporters and inward investors, was also good news for importers, retailers and holidaymakers.

Speaking after the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, had addressed the dinner, Sir Colin said the CBI had been encouraged by the way the Government had seen eye to eye on the need for stability, sustainability and economic development.

But he added: "Central to our largely mutual philosophy is the need to combat and control inflation, ahead of almost all other economic considerations. "We simply cannot afford to trade short term gain for long-term pain."

Despite yesterday's developments, most City economists still believe the outcome will be "no change" after next week's two-day MPC meeting, which will start on Wednesday.

## Cellnet reveals personal tariffs

By Peter Thal Larsen

CELLNET, the UK's second largest mobile phone operator, will today unveil initiatives intended to make up the ground it has lost on its competitors.

Chief among these is a service which retrospectively adjusts phone users' bills to the most efficient tariff according to how much they use the phone.

The offer, which is part of a £20m marketing campaign which kicks off today, allows mobile users to sign up to a particular tariff, secure in the knowledge that they will receive a refund on their bill if it turns out that another tariff would have been better suited.

Peter Erskine, chief executive, said the rebates, which will be calculated on a quarterly basis, were likely to amount to "double digit percentages" off many Cellnet users' bills.

As part of its "First Cellnet" campaign, the company plans to dispense with locking new users into fixed term contracts, though discounts will be available for customers who sign up for longer periods. It will also offer extra discounts for numbers which callers use frequently.

Mr Erskine said the campaign would help Cellnet attract new users as well as hold on to existing customers. He said he aimed to reduce the rate of churn in its customer base from 30 per cent to close to 20 per cent.

At the same time, Cellnet will cut call prices and launch a "prepaid" mobile phone.

Cellnet has been a loser in the battle of the mobile phone operators recently, signing up just 300,000 new customers last year compared to more than 400,000 for Vodafone, Orange and One2One.

## EMI 'will stay independent'

By Nigel Cope  
Associate City Editor

EMI's chairman, Sir Colin Southgate, yesterday launched a stirring defence of the British music group's independence and said it need not become another trophy asset like Rolls-Royce and the Savoy that would fall to an overseas buyer.

He denied that EMI had been jilted at the altar by Seagram, the American drinks and music group which has since tied the knot with PolyGram at a \$10.6bn deal and said EMI could be successful on its own.

"EMI is still number three in the industry (behind Seagram-PolyGram and Sony), we are still independent and we still have the best figures in the industry. We have been around for 100 years and have a strong back catalogue and strong local rosters of artists. We should be jolly proud of EMI. Britain doesn't have too many companies that are number three in a global market. We still aim to be number one."

He said he had no plans to

## 'Means tests for pension'

By Andrew Verity

ABODY commissioned by the Government to report on the state of pension provision in the UK is set to urge ministers to consider a form of means-testing for the Basic State Pension.

The independent Pensions Provision Group is warning that pensioner inequality will rise massively over the next two decades if the Government goes on raising the basic state pension only in line with prices.

In a report to be published in the next two weeks, the group will set out a means by which rights to the Basic State Pension could be targeted on the poorest pensioners.

Tom Ross, chairman of the group, said: "Pensioners now get much the same whether they are well-off or poor. One has to ask whether it would be better to divert some resources to those who really need it."

The report is the most comprehensive review of pension provision undertaken and is likely to be very influential in the Government's programme

of welfare reform.

Mr Ross said one reform could restrict rights to a higher level of basic state pension — perhaps £100 a week — to those whose lifetime earnings are too low for a decent private pension. The rights of those on higher incomes would correspondingly be reduced. It would be based on lifetime income. The report is also set to explode the myth that a "demographic timebomb" will make state benefits unaffordable as the retired population increases over the next three decades from 10 million to 15 million.

"By the middle of the next century, the proportion of GDP we spend on state pensions will be less than today because the larger number of recipients will be offset by the lower level of benefits," Mr Ross said.

However, the group will report that restoring the link between the basic state pension and earnings, abolished in 1979, would boost the cost of state pensions by a quarter within decades.

### TOURIST RATES

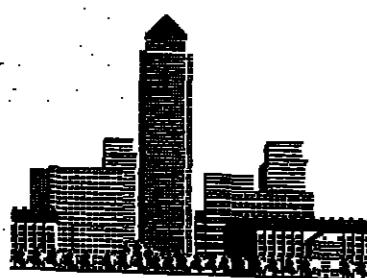
Australia (\$)	2.5521
Austria (schillings)	19.72
Belgium (francs)	58.01
Canada (\$)	2.3205
New Zealand (\$)	2.9503
Norway (krone)	11.85
Portugal (escudos)	285.71
Finland (marks)	8.5940
Saudi Arabia (rials)	5.9604
Singapore (\$)	2.5630
Germany (marks)	2.8144
Spain (pesetas)	238.11
South Africa (rands)	8.6002
Sweden (krone)	12.36
Hong Kong (\$)	12.29
Ireland (pounds)	1.1128
Switzerland (francs)	2.3409
India (rupees)	82.08
Thailand (bahts)	57.47
Turkey (tliras)	401.873
USA (\$)	1.5979
Malaysia (ringgits)	5.9358

Rates for indication purposes only  
Source: Thomas Cook

www.bloomberg.com/uk

source: Bloomberg





## OUTLOOK ON DELAYS TO BA'S AMERICAN LINK, IONICA'S PROBLEMS AND WHY NEWCASTLE'S HEAD-HUNTING WILL BE HARD

# In the end, Ayling may have to take off

BOB Ayling thinks that the staff turnover at British Airways is too low so he wants more people to leave the airline. In case you were wondering, he is not about to take his own advice and quit the chief executive's post for a plum job in the Government. He may be a fan of Tony Blair but right now he likes BA more and he has reassured his chairman of that.

Most of us would reckon that a company which cannot hang on to its staff is a poor one whereas the company that no one wants to leave is a good employer. And so BA is. It's just that Mr Ayling thinks it can be made even better if he can just ease out the people he no longer wants and bring in those he does. It is a familiar story.

In order to achieve its target of recruiting 15,000 staff into customer friendly jobs over the next three years whilst limiting the net increase in the workforce to 7,500, BA will have to roughly double its rate of natural wastage from 2 per cent to 4 per cent.

This is a tall order for a business where the perk of free flights goes a long way to encouraging staff loyalty. But BA is resigned to throwing money at the problem and those who can be prised away by early retirement schemes can expect very generous settlement terms.

Unfortunately, this process of shrinking the airline while simultaneously growing it is an expensive business. Thus BA contrived to report a 10 per cent fall in profits last year despite achieving £250m worth of savings through its Business Efficiency Plan.

BA says the decline in profitability was due to currency losses and one-off strike costs. But it rather makes the point that running in order just to stand still is not enough when external turbulence can still knock you badly off course.

The City wonders when all these efficiency gains are going to start falling through to the bottom line. In the meantime the shares continue to underperform and the goal of £1bn in pre-tax profits to match the £1bn of efficiency gains BA has promised looks as far away as ever.

There is, of course, one way that BA's profits could lift off and that is if it finally gets regulatory approval for its alliance with American Airlines. Forget all that talk about increased competition across the Atlantic squeezing BA's margins. Even if BA/AA do sacrifice 300 slots, their combined market dominance will produce big profits.

However, the alliance is still not a done deal. BA and AA are about to celebrate the second anniversary of signing the deal and even with a following wind it could not now be launched until summer, 1999. If the alliance is not cleared for take-off this autumn, Mr Ayling may well be on the telephone to Mr Blair.

### Breakdown in communications

THE TELECOMS company Ionica inhabits two parallel worlds. In one, customers cannot sign up fast enough for its revolutionary wireless telephone service,

drawn by the promise of 10 per cent off their existing bill and a funky black box on the outside wall. In fact, Ionica's problem is not lack of demand but lack of capacity.

In the other world, investors cannot sell their Ionica shares quickly enough. It has been one of the stock market's all-time duff investments. In fact, the question is not if but when the company will go out of business.

More and more frequently these days the two worlds collide and Ionica's management is forced to explain to a bemused staff why a company that was launched with such high hopes is now regarded as the pariah of the Square Mile.

The answer lies in relative expectations and, in the City, the expectations of Ionica are not good. Yesterday the shares drifted down another 11.5p to close at 24.5p compared with an issue price of 30p less than a year ago when SBC Warburg Dillon Read brought Ionica to market. Even though there is 50p a share of cash in the business, it is trading at less than the break-up value of its assets.

And yet Ionica's basic proposition remains a good one. It has targeted the local loop (known to the rest of us as the domestic market) where, as BT proves every day, profits are easier to earn than in long-distance. What's more Ionica's technology allows it to sign up customers for a fraction of the cost of the cable companies.

Where Ionica has come unstuck is in the execution. It underestimated the complexity and cost of rolling out its network

of base stations and it did not have the software ready in time to meet initial customer demand. The result is that roll-out is at least two years behind schedule, customer connections are not being achieved at the rate promised and the banks have said no more money until new equity investment is brought into the business.

A further question mark over Ionica is whether it will miss out on the explosion in data traffic because of the nature of its technology and the decision to concentrate on domestic not business customers. This remains an unknown.

The funding gap is also not known with any precision. But Ionica will need to find at least another £700m on top of the £600m already raised to complete the network. Or someone else will.

The prospect of massive dilution helps explain why the share price has taken it so badly. But at the same time it makes Ionica an interesting proposition for a big foreign brother like say Deutsche Telekom. If Ionica can find the right kind of strategic investor, then they will be able to pick up a business that already covers one in eight UK homes for a fraction of the price investors paid last July. It will be brutal for existing shareholders but all may not be lost just yet for the company itself.

### Antics in the boardroom

NEWCASTLE United are going to be spending the close season in the transfer

market. They already needed some new talent on the field. But now they are also looking to hire a couple of non-executive directors, one of whom can act as chairman of the plc.

Yesterday's departure of the midfield duo of Sir Terence Harrison and John May demonstrates that if corporate governance did indeed score a victory in March when Douglas Hall and Freddie Shepherd were eased out, it was at best pyrrhic one.

Shareholders and fans (largely one in the same at Newcastle) might wonder what is going on.

Although the two men whose antics in a Spanish brothel caused so much angst, have gone, little else has changed. Cameron Hall Developments, Mr Hall's company, and Stephen Offshore, still control a majority of the shares and their nominees sit on the board.

Neither man looks in any hurry to reduce that shareholding to under 50 per cent - the promise that was dangled before shareholders in March. Meanwhile, there is just one independent non-executive left on the board - and that is the accident-prone Denis Cassidy. This board, laden down as it is with Hall and Shepherd nominees or employees, is the one that will now seek a new chairman.

The company says rather smugly that it will need to be someone who passes the "smell test". If anything, it is the candidates who are more likely to turn their noses up.

## IN BRIEF

### Eastern Gas is cleared of allegations, says regulator

OFGAS yesterday said its investigation into Eastern Natural Gas (Retail) Ltd has cleared the company of allegations of fraudulent behaviour and added that it will not confirm a provisional order placed on Northern Electric earlier in the year. Ofgas investigated both Eastern Natural Gas and Northern Electric following media reports alleging high-pressure doorstep sales techniques. "Eastern has given formal voluntary undertakings to the regulator that it will improve its methods of recruiting and training sales representatives and the way in which it conducts after-sales audits," Ofgas said. It added that it has asked Eastern to review the payment methods available to customers in the North-west of England.

OFGAS said it has also reviewed the action taken by Northern Electric following the imposition of a provisional order on the company in March. The remedial action taken by the company has satisfied Ofgas that it is not necessary for the order to be confirmed, it said. Commenting on the two investigations, Ofgas director general of gas supply, Claire Spottiswoode said: "Our latest figures show that the number of complaints on doorstep selling peaked at the end of March and declined by almost 40 per cent in April. This is good news and shows that the new marketing condition which Ofgas added to the supply licence this year, is having an effect."

### New Look offer at up to 175p

NEW LOOK, the fashion retailer, said yesterday it has set its offer price range at 155p-175p per share. Announcing the listing particulars for its placing, intermediaries offer and employee offer, New Look said its market capitalisation at the mid-point of the offer price range would be £330m. New Look said the offers are expected to raise approximately £125m. Of this total, £82m is being raised for the company, of which approximately £40m will be used to redeem certain of the company's preference shares and pay accrued dividends up to the date of the admission, New Look said. The balance of £42m will be employed to reduce net debt. The intermediaries and employee offers both opened today.

### Managers proud to be green

UK managers see themselves as environmentally aware, with nearly 90 per cent saying that they personally take action to help the environment. But often this does not translate into company-wide policies, according to a report "A Green and Pleasant Land?" published today by the Institute of Management and Electrolux UK. Tony Jumper, campaign director at Friends of the Earth, said the report confirmed that, despite all the green assurances of recent years, "environmental policy is driven by fear of paying out compensation for the damage they cause or because of threats to their public relations". Such incentives were insufficient to ensure that the environment was protected.

### Bootleggers harm Gallagher

THE CIGARETTE maker Gallagher warned yesterday that bootlegging of tobacco from mainland Europe, where taxes are much lower than in Britain, remains a "significant issue". The company said sales fell in the legitimate domestic cigarette market by just over 4 per cent during the first three months of this year, but chairman Peter Wilson told shareholders at the annual meeting he believed the market "may well be roughly flat" because of "bootlegging". "The UK government needs to take the whole issue of smuggling more seriously - ultimately it is the small retailer who is being punished," said Wilson. Gallagher, the country's biggest tobacco company, owns the best selling cigarette brand Benson and Hedges as well as leading low tar brand Silk Cut. Britain has 12 million smokers, consuming about 77 billion cigarettes. Gallagher shares fell 0.75p to 309.25p.



Sir Colin Marshall and Bob Ayling of BA, which was badly hit by the strength of sterling and a cabin crew strike

# BA plans more jobs as profits fall sharply

By Michael Harrison

BRITISH AIRWAYS yesterday shrugged off a sharp fall in profits by hinting that approval for its long-delayed alliance with American Airlines is in sight and unveiling fresh plans to expand the workforce and increase efficiency savings.

Bob Ayling, chief executive, said BA had identified further efficiency measures worth £300m - putting it on target to achieve £1bn of cost savings by 2000. He also said the workforce would increase by 7,500 to just under 70,000 over the next three years.

Mr Ayling said that BA was now in the "final straight" in its long battle to gain regulatory clearance from London, Washington and Brussels for the tie-up with American. But he conceded that even with regu-

latory approval by this autumn the alliance would not now be launched until next summer - three years after the agreement was signed.

The BA chief executive also brushed aside reports that he was thinking of quitting the airline to take up a senior position within the Blair government. "I have not received any offer, I don't expect to receive one and I am not seeking one," he said.

"The chairman [Sir Colin Marshall] has asked if he could count on me staying at BA and I said he could."

Mr Ayling was speaking as BA announced a 10 per cent fall in pre-tax profits last year to £580m. The strength of sterling knocked £200 off profits and last summer's cabin crew strike cost a further £125m.

The airline also lost "tens of millions of pounds" because of

far implement by BA - mainly outsourcing and renegotiating

## Nationwide scraps fees for more than 30 services

NATIONWIDE, the UK's largest building society, is to abolish fees for more than 30 services, a move which it reckons could save its customers more than £12m a year.

The building society said that from 1 June, it would no longer charge customers for obtaining duplicate statements, stopping cheques, changing building insurance to an alternative provider, or using LINK cash machines.

"Nationwide is underlining its commitment to make membership of the society mean more, in a way which sets it apart from its principal competi-

tors", the building society said in a statement.

Brian Davis, Nationwide's chief executive, said: "As a building society we are not driven to maximise the profit we make out of our customers at every turn. We can therefore not only listen to these concerns [customer concerns] but act on them."

Nationwide, which has seen many of its competitors convert to banks and float on the stock market, remains committed to the principal of mutual ownership.

The building society is confident its members will vote to

retain its mutual status this summer, according to company sources.

The society is facing a second attempt to force it to convert to a plc at its annual general meeting of members on July 23. Two demutualisation candidates are seeking election to the board.

Last year, Michael Hardman failed in his attempt to be elected to the board on a demutualisation ticket. Undeterred, Mr Hardman has chosen to stand again this year. Andrew Muir is the other demutualisation candidate standing for election.

The cost of recent events has yet to be calculated, but Nomura Securities Singapore forecasts a 10 per cent economic decline, largely based on the attacks on the ethnic Chinese business community.

## Talks resume on IMF's \$43bn rescue package to Indonesia

By Stephen Vines

in Hong Kong

TALKS on the resumption of International Monetary Fund (IMF) aid to Indonesia began again yesterday forcing the new government and its international creditors to find a way of meeting the IMF's demands without sparking off rioting.

B.J. Habibie, the new president, has pledged to honour the tough terms of the IMF's \$43bn rescue package, but has not indicated how.

Moreover, targets agreed with the IMF in April are looking increasingly academic. Inflation is running at 50 per cent, trading on the stock exchange has ground to a halt, aside from a rush out of shares associated with Suharto family interests.

Leading the IMF team is Hubert Neiss, the fund's Asia-Pacific director. He said: "Political stability is extremely important for economic

and independent estimates put private sector debt at \$80bn.

British lenders, primarily HSBC Holdings, have some \$4.3bn at risk.

Because it is unclear how long President Habibie will be able to cling to power, the IMF is breaking its practice of shunning talks with opposition leaders. Mr Neiss will meet Amien Rais and Megawati Sukarnoputri, the two most prominent, as well as the trade union leader Muchtar Pakpahan, who has just been released from jail and is a prominent opponent of the IMF rescue package.

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# Footsie dives as Far East worries return

## MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

Asia returned to haunt the stock market, sending Footsie tumbling 100.5 points to 5,870.2.

A tide of woe seemed to flow from the Far East. Worries of another wave of bad debts prompted Moody's, the credit agency, to cut its rating for five leading Japanese banks, and Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's chief executive, warned that the former colony's economy was likely to shrink because of the Asian downturn. The threat to Indonesian contracts also hurt.

With the Hong Kong and Tokyo share markets weak, New York giving ground on the Pacific problems and markets like Moscow in free-fall, there was little incentive for buyers to struggle for stock. But nevertheless they were out in some force. "The quality of the buying has been much higher than the selling", observed one market man.

The Moscow market, which has attracted consider-

able amounts of foreign cash, is creating increasing unease in some investment houses. In panicky trading it fell more than 7 per cent. Last week it suffered a 12 per cent fall.

Only 15 Footsie stocks managed to make progress. Halifax led the pack with a 48p jump to 923p.

The former building society was inspired by its signaled arrival tomorrow in the Morgan Stanley international index which should make the shares more attractive to US and European investors.

An alleged approach to Royal Bank of Scotland was another influence. Any such initiative by the cash-rich Halifax was construed as a management attempt to put the group in play. Royal Bank, it was said, rejected the Halifax overtures; its shares fell 5p to 1,025p.

Most financials, particularly those with Far Eastern associations, retreated. HSBC slumped 10p to 1,531p and

Standard Chartered 40.5p to 772p. Others lowered included Bank of Scotland and the yet-to-be consummated merger-Commercial Union and General Accident.

Misys, the first computer group to achieve Footsie membership, was another blue chip to throw off the gloom clouds. It jumped 166p to 3,534p.

Blue Circle Industries, 7.75p to 388.75p, and Gramads, 16p to 1,135p, strengthened.

The Footsie downturn was too much for the supporting indices. The mid and small cap measurements were hit hard. Marketing group Taylor Nelson, which has moved into the mid cap index, hardened 2.5p to 134.5p and Seton Healthcare, expected to join following the take over of Scholl, improved 50p to 822.5p as tracker funds looked for stock.

The Falkland Islands trio came under pressure. Suggestions that Ameara Hess,

the US group, has not found commercial quantities of oil and gas off the Falklands did the damage. The Americans said they would report on their drilling by the end of this month.

When they have finished, the Borgny Dolphin rig will move to where the Lasmo-led consortium will search. Lasmo has a 62.5 per cent stake; Desire

Petroleum 25 per cent and a Canadian group 12.5 per cent.

John Gilmour, analyst at Matheson Securities, is unnerved by the likelihood of the Amerada Hess drill being unsuccessful. "One must remember that in the North Sea 19 wells were drilled before a commercial discovery was made", he said.

Desire, which had led the

Falklands charge, fell 67.5p to

377.5; Greenwich Resources

lost 4.5p to 35.75p and West-

mount 47.5p to 227.5p. Lasmo,

which may have struck it rich

in Pakistan, fell 2p to 295.5p.

Hillsdale Holdings was

busily traded on the expected

Unigate bid. The shares held

at 198.5p. Break-out hopes

lifted Booker 4p to 263.5p.

Cadbury Schweppes meet-

ing analysts next week, fell 25p

to 932p, and Kingfisher, show-

ing researchers Darty, its

French electrical chain later

this month, shaded 7p to

1,083p. Engineer RBA, with an

investment meeting at Hen-

derson Crosthwaite, hardened

4p to 531p.

Profits warnings took their

toll. Hall Engineering slumped

57p to 200p; Whitecroft, an

industrial group, 27.5p to 81p and

engineer Crabtree 12p to 57.5p.

Engineer Powerscreen

weakened 22p to 110.5p after

reporting a £65m loss. The

Stock Exchange is said to be

investigating dealings in the

shares ahead of the figures. On

Friday an institutional investor

sold 670,000 shares well below

the then market price.

Philippine Gold jumped

4p to 17.5p on a smattering of

small buy orders with some

suggesting an encouraging

statement will be made.

PhoneLink, up 4.5p to 55p,

said it was in talks which could

lead to two acquisitions. Tom

Hoskins, the little brewer and

pub-owner, frothed 2.5p to

37.5p. Fairfares Group, run-

ning the Sandbanks ferry off

Pool in Dorset, has acquired

27.42 per cent from former di-

rector Fred Ward.

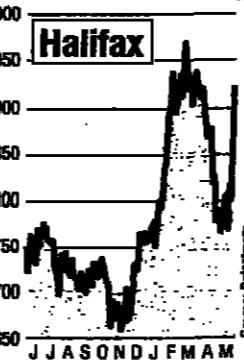
## TAKING STOCK

CALLUNA, an electronics group, put on 3.5p to 34p; the price, 46.25p a year ago, was down to 8.5p at the start of the year. The sparky run stems from unrelated US influences. A transatlantic rival is in financial difficulties and there seem to be strengthening hopes of a major American deal. According to the rumour mill, Calluna's "hardwall" system, aimed at preventing hackers getting into computer networks, has attracted the attention of the Pentagon which is said to be keen to take on the company's product.

SHARES of JXN Oil & Gas shrank to 31.5p but could suffer a sharp fall today. The company, the subject of a fierce takeover battle last year, produced increased losses of £2.3m. A £54m takeover bid by Ramco Energy was defeated by Ukrzgazprom, the Ukrainian state-owned oil company, which waded into the stock market, buying a 22 per cent blocking stake and forcing Ramco to walk away.

## Share Spotlight

share price, pence



Source: Bloomberg

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# There's no need to throw the bubbles out with the bathwater



DIANE  
COYLE  
WONDERS  
WHETHER A  
TAX WILL CURB  
BUBBLE  
SPECULATORS

"THERE'S a sucker born every minute," the American impresario P.T. Barnum famously claimed. The Barnum theory, applied to the financial markets, has been enjoying a new lease of life in the wake of last year's Asian crash. To many commentators those events confirm that the markets are fuelled by speculative bubbles, with a hundred suckers for every Soros. And this explanation has given a new lease of life to proposals for a tax on international currency trades in order to discourage frothy speculation - a so-called Tobin Tax after its foremost advocate, the Nobel Laureate James Tobin.

This is the reasoning. Currency markets are obviously necessary to finance *bona fide* trade and investment, but all too easily speculative bubbles emerge which drive exchange rates far away from the levels that would be justified by economic fundamentals such as future GDP growth, inflation and export prospects. A small tax on currency transactions, however, might well discourage enough short-term trading not related to "real" financial flows, to prevent such divergences of

exchange rates from where they ought to be. Its fans also argue that a Tobin tax would raise funds for useful expenditure such as third world debt relief. What could be more satisfying than taking from the international elite of financial fat cats and giving to the world's poorest people, at the same time as making the financial markets more orderly?

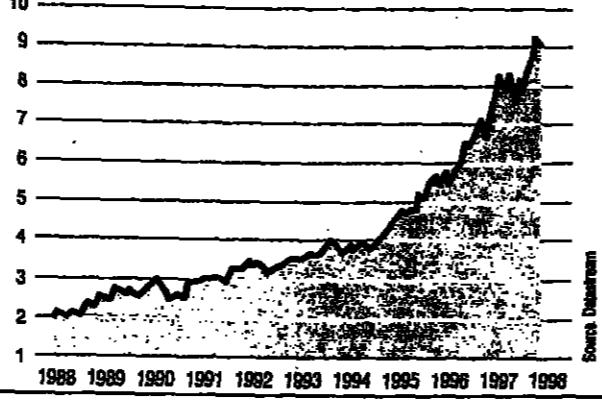
Sadly, there are many possible objections to a Tobin tax. Some are practical. Who would enforce and collect it? Why should a small tax actually discourage speculators when transaction costs in most markets are already much higher than the proposed tax rate - and when the potential gains from speculation are so enormous?

But the main problem with the idea is that it rests on the *existence of immutable* fundamentals, which sensible investors will reflect in the price at which they are willing to trade but from which the Soroses and suckers can push them too far in one direction. There has to be an underlying truth, reflected in the efficient market price, from which self-f fulfilling bubbles emerge and, ultimately, burst. The right policy for market stability in this case is to skin off the bubbles before they grow too big.

A pleasing vision, but a false one. The evidence is that financial markets, and not just their bubbles, can be inherently self-fulfilling. There is no true validity corresponding to an objective set of economic fundamentals. To see this, just think about the importance of technology stocks in Wall Street's long bull run. None of the investors in these software and biotech companies has the remotest idea how valuable they ought to be, and the stocks trade at awe-inspiring prices while the companies' earnings remain low or even negative. There is simply too much uncertainty about future demand for different types of high-tech products, not to mention the underlying science. But the same point can be made about the Asian markets. They were val-

## Dow Jones Industrials

share price index, 300's



able as long as they were valuable, and when enough investors changed their mind, they weren't.

As the great master, John Maynard Keynes put it, writing in 1937, a market valuation "...is subject to sudden and violent changes. The practice of calmness and immobility, of certainty and security, suddenly breaks down. New fears and hopes will, without warning, take charge of human conduct. The forces of disillusion may suddenly impose a new conventional basis of valuation."

In today's high-speed markets, a change in expectations can rapidly create a new future. As soon as the general optimism about the Tiger economies founders, for whatever reason, their currency and stock markets crashed and, lo, their economic future no longer looks rosy. This is not to say that fundamentals do not matter at all, for it is also true that the Asian economies were labouring under weak banking systems, corrupt loans and bad government. If this were not the case, they could probably have sailed quite swiftly out of the crash, as the western economies did after the stock market crash of 1987. As it is, recovery is going to take a long haul of political and institutional reform as well as the IMF's economic medicine. In the real economy, the fundamentals do still matter.

JM Keynes warned of the "forces of disillusion" which drive the volatility of share prices. This is consistent with the view that the market is entirely self-fulfilling, because in that case the more investors there are, the more likely there are to be different views about where the market is heading. Bubbles will emerge - they do so whenever a critical mass of investors adopts the view that it is head-

ing up and up. But increasing transaction costs via a tax would not only not prevent bubbles but would also increase day-to-day volatility.

Does this have any implications for Wall Street now? One comfort is that if Wall Street does crash, the American economy is in good shape. Inflation is low. So is government borrowing. The US technological edge has widened, and the economy starts from a position of having the lowest unemployment rate for a quarter of a century. Besides, Mr Greenspan proved himself amazingly good at sweeping up after the 1987 crash, and there is every reason to believe the Fed would do as good a job again.

However, even better news is that there exists a wide difference of opinion about where US shares are heading. The believers in a "new economic paradigm" argue that technology is delivering higher prospective growth and low inflation, justifying the current and higher levels of share prices. Somewhat alarmingly, all of Main Street, USA seems to have joined this group, if the popularity of investment clubs is anything to go by. Still, there are real benefits from a frothy stock market. It does encourage venture capitalists and entrepreneurial investors in high-technology companies no end, helping to create its own fundamentals.

On the other hand, there is also a Bearish camp which reckons the stock market is a dangerously stretched bubble about to burst at the first clear sign of re-emerging inflation and a return in the business cycle. Along with Alan Greenspan's carefully timed reflections that the stock market might be suffering "irrational exuberance" and his steady massaging of expectations in readiness for a rise in interest rates, we have to hope that there might just be enough sceptics in the market already to prevent anything worse than a serious correction on Wall Street.

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# Newspaper group profits hit record

By Vincent Wall

The current financial year has started positively in all areas of Independent newspapers' global operations, chairman Tony O'Reilly informed the group's AGM in Dublin yesterday.

"With the Irish economy continuing to grow strongly and the southern hemisphere's economies weathering the fall out from South East Asia we expect the out-turn for the year will be an improvement over 1997," he added.

Pre-tax profits rose by 36 per cent last year to a record level of just £18.1m.

Dr O'Reilly said Princes Holdings the Cable & MDS company in which Independent has a 50 per cent stake, now had over 140,000 customers and a capacity for 500,000 homes passed, equivalent to half the households in the country.

He said he hoped to be able to announce some interesting news on developments in this area in the next two months but he did not elaborate as to whether this referred to Princes Holdings' anticipated bid for Cablelink or the possibility that the company might take a Stock Exchange flotation.

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Tony O'Reilly (right) and Liam Healy at yesterday's AGM

tions in Ireland and that Independent was equally interested.

Asked about reports that the *Daily Mail* might be about to establish a national daily title in Ireland in partnership with *Irish Independent* on Sunday, Mr Healy said every new entrant would pose a threat but that it would have a tough fight against the likes of *The Star*, *the Mirror* and *the Sun*.

In terms of the group's core Irish titles, he said all papers, including the *Sunday Independent* and *Independent on Sunday*, were making considerably lower losses than before. Mr Healy said that the group had not yet decided how much to invest in the London *Independent* and the *Independent on Sunday*. "It's a question of evaluating what's required in terms of bringing the titles back to profitability in a three to five year timescale. But we will support them for whatever is needed."

Earlier Brendan Hopkins, managing director of Independent Newspapers UK, said sales on the daily *Independent* had stabilised significantly at 220,000 while sales on the *Independent on Sunday* had risen by 7 per cent since the titles were purchased outright earlier this year.

## EU blocks pay-TV link up

THE European Commission yesterday wielded its rarely used power to ban big corporate mergers and blocked a proposed alliance in Germany's pay-television market.

The Commission's antitrust chief Karel van Miert said he had agreed a compromise with German media tycoon Leo Kirch and Deutsche

Telekom, two of the partners in the deal, but that Bertelsmann, the third key player, had rejected making any further concessions to win EU approval.

"The Commission has just unanimously decided to ban the venture of Deutsche Telekom, Bertelsmann and the Kirch group. That means a formal decision has today been taken,"

- Reuters

Mr Van Miert told a news conference.

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# Gulland is given Derby go-ahead

GEOFF WRAGG yesterday gave the former favourite Gulland the go-ahead to run in the Derby. A trip to Epsom has put to rest the trainer's fears that the ground will be too firm for his colt, so he has scrapped plans to switch the Chester Vase winner to Sunday's Prix du Jockey-Club at Chantilly and reverted to the original target of the Epsom Classic six days later.

"The decision has been made and Gulland will go to Epsom," Wragg revealed. "I have been to Epsom and it is genuine good ground from what I saw yesterday - the ground is very good. The forecast is unsettled too. And it will be better for me to have an extra few days to get him ready."

Gulland topped the ante-post market on the Derby after chasing home Xaar in last month's Craven Stakes at Newmarket only to be pushed out in the betting after a less than impressive win over The Glow Worm at Chester three weeks ago. He is quoted at 8-1 by William Hill.

"Gulland is very well and I am very pleased with him," Wragg added. "Everything's going OK. I am never confident

but he has earned the right to be one of the favourites and we have got our fingers crossed!"

Gulland will be only a fourth Derby runner and a first in 10 years for Wragg, who won the race for Teesside in 1983.

The trainer, whose King George VI And Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes winner Pentire missed the race because he was originally thought not good enough to enter, sent

RICHARD EDMONDSON  
NAP: Davis Rock  
(Ayr 3.50)  
NB: Last Lap  
(Ayr 4.20)

out 5-2 favourite Red Glow to finish fourth in 1988.

Michael Hills will again ride Gulland, leaving his trainer father Barry looking for a ride if The Glow Worm reappears at Epsom.

Leading Derby hope Haami "delighted" John Dunlop yesterday morning in a racecourse workout. He was put through his paces at Goodwood in a gallop with last year's Derby second Silver Patriarch, who is warming up for next Friday's Coronation Cup.

And his trainer's racing secretary Marcus Hosgood revealed: "Mr Dunlop was very, very happy. They went over about a mile and a furlong at Goodwood this morning and it went fine. The trainer is delighted. Paul Eddery will ride Silver Patriarch at Epsom but I'm not sure about whether Richard Hills will be on Haami as Hamdan Al Maktoom also has Muhammed Al Maktoom in the Derby."

Haami has been prominent in the Derby betting since he finished fifth to King Of Kings in the 2,000 Guineas and is quoted at 10-1 by Ladbrokes.

Ladbrokes yesterday cut Courteous' price for the Vodafone Derby from 20-1 into 16-1 after the colt was confirmed an intended runner at Epsom. And punters were warned to respect the Paul Cole-trained colt in the Classic a week on Saturday, even though he will be running for the first time since he won the Classic Trial at Sandown last month.

"He hasn't run again but that was always the plan," stressed Anthony Penfold, racing manager to owner Fahd Salman. "He is a May 14 foal and a late



Cape Verdi and Frankie Dettori surge clear of the 1,000 Guineas field at Newmarket on 3 May. Now she is to take on the colts. Photograph: Alspott

developer and we didn't want to give him another hard race. He has come on for the race, done everything we have asked of him and worked well at Newbury last weekend. He won on soft ground at Sandown but we feel he will be equally effective on better ground. He is a very good mover and we were anxious before Sandown about whether he had been thought more likely to go for the French Derby."

Courteous, who will be ridden at Epsom by Richard Quinn, had attracted little ante-post support in recent days, as he had been thought more likely to go for the French Derby.

But Penfold stressed: "It was only ever a possibility he was going to France. We had always kept our options open and going to Epsom is not a change of plan."

● Silver Patriarch, short-headed by Benny The Dip at Epsom 12 months ago, has been confirmed a runner in the Coronation Cup at Epsom a week tomorrow.

## Ayr

**HYPERION**  
2.20 Miss Grapette 3.50 Nomore Mr Niceguy  
2.50 Bowcliffe Grange 4.20 Triumphant  
3.20 Bride's Answer 4.50 Thourough Belle

GOING: Good to firm, watered. STALLIES: Straight - stands side; round course - inside. DRAW ADVANTAGE: High usually best 5f & 6f. @Left-hand galloping course. @Course is E of town on A78. Ayr station (service from Glasgow) 1m. ADMISSION: Club £1.50; Grandstand £7. (CAPS) £10. CAR PARK: Free. PRACTICALITIES: 1m Johnstone (0161 328 2222) 0161 328 5000. LEADING JOCKEYS: 1: M Johnson (01246 471 515); Mrs M. Revell (01246 471 515); S. Koenig (01246 471 515); J. Fortune (01246 471 515). MEETING: 1m Johnstone 15-22 (20%), J Fortune 19 (25%). K Falcon 15-23 (25%); J. Carroll 15-14 (10%). FAVOURITES: 140-1 (33.4%). LONG DISTANCE RUNNER: Lady Rockstar (450) has been sent 360 miles. BLINKED FIRST TIME: The Lamont Wom (Meredith, 330).

**2.20 EBF AYR MAY NOVICE STAKES (CLASS D) £4,500 added 5f**  
£10,000 added 1m 5f Penalty Value £5,710

1 0301 PIPER BASIC (11) Frank Brady J Goffs 5.4  
2 0202 KELLY'S KELLY (12) M. T. Kelly 5.4  
3 0203 SO WILLYNG (12) M. T. Kelly 5.4  
4 0204 SUPER FORUM (13) Mrs Jacqueline Conroy M Johnson 8.2  
5 0205 MISS GRAPETTE (13) A. E. Roberts J. Berry 7.7  
8 0206 PALACE GREEN (10) J. Chapman D Chapman 5.7  
- 4 dead

BETTING: 1-4 Miss Grapette, 1-4 Super Forum, 2-3 Kelly's Kelly, 3-5 Palace Green (5-7). Form: 1-7 Miss Grapette, 2-5 Palace Green, 3-6 Kelly's Kelly, 4-8 Palace Green, 5-10 Super Forum, 6-12 Kelly's Kelly, 7-12 Palace Green, 8-13 Kelly's Kelly, 9-14 Palace Green, 10-15 Palace Green, 11-16 Palace Green, 12-17 Palace Green, 13-18 Palace Green, 14-19 Palace Green, 15-20 Palace Green, 16-21 Palace Green, 17-22 Palace Green, 18-23 Palace Green, 19-24 Palace Green, 20-25 Palace Green, 21-26 Palace Green, 22-27 Palace Green, 23-28 Palace Green, 24-29 Palace Green, 25-30 Palace Green, 26-31 Palace Green, 27-32 Palace Green, 28-33 Palace Green, 29-34 Palace Green, 30-35 Palace Green, 31-36 Palace Green, 32-37 Palace Green, 33-38 Palace Green, 34-39 Palace Green, 35-40 Palace Green, 36-41 Palace Green, 37-42 Palace Green, 38-43 Palace Green, 39-44 Palace Green, 40-45 Palace Green, 41-46 Palace Green, 42-47 Palace Green, 43-48 Palace Green, 44-49 Palace Green, 45-50 Palace Green, 46-51 Palace Green, 47-52 Palace Green, 48-53 Palace Green, 49-54 Palace Green, 50-55 Palace Green, 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## Kuerten stays cool and tries to keep focus on his game

### Tennis

By John Roberts  
in Paris

**THERE** is a tradition here for sportswear manufacturers to utilise the entire side of a building to promote a leading player. Jim Courier, Andre Agassi and Mary Pierce are among those who have been featured in the past. This year a Brazilian dominates Porte d'Anteuil, a stroll away from Roland Garros. The figure is not Gustavo Kuerten, the defending French

Open champion, but Ronaldo. The footballer is so big that his left arm extends to the side of an adjacent building. Whether he will arrive in person to watch his progress of his friend Kuerten is open to doubt. Although the Brazilian's squad's headquarters is only half an hour's drive from Roland Garros, Kuerten has resisted invitations to visit them, and he hopes, respectfully, that the footballers will not crowd his court.

"I would love to see the players, but I will not go to their training ground because I must stay focused on the tournament," Kuerten said, "and if I see them at Roland Garros I will tell them to go away and practise, because I want them to win the World Cup."

Gustavo is half-joking about sending them away," said Paulo Cleti, Brazil's Davis Cup captain, "but he needs to concentrate on his game. If he is still involved in the later stages of the tournament next week, he would like to stay on in Paris to see Brazil's opening match [against Scotland]. But, at this stage, that is only supposition."

It is. Today Kuerten is due to play his second round match against Marat Safin, the tall, powerful, 18-year-old Russian who eliminated Andre Agassi in five sets on Tuesday.

Kuerten's determination to do himself justice, having failed to win a title during the 12 months since his spectacular triumph here, has been disguised by a generally relaxed attitude. His dealing with the French media during the lead-up to the championships has earned him their "prix orange" award.

The "prix citron" has been awarded to Marcelo Rios, the favourite to relieve Kuerten of his title, if not his Mr Nice Guy image. Rios has the dubious distinction of becoming the first player to be beaten the lemon three years in a row. It should be emphasised that these awards are judged on media co-operation, not on behaviour on the court. Otherwise, would Mata Wiliander's name appear on the roll of lemons?

Not that Rios would be likely to worry overmuch if he received lemons in perpetuity as long as his ability to play tennis

remained unimpaired. Yesterday, having escaped the worst of rain delays to advance to the third round by defeating Spain's Emilio Alvarez, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2, the Chilean expressed satisfaction with the power in his elbow.

"I've been much better every day," he said. "Always at night it's a little bit sore and I have to have some massage and take some pills, but its much better than it was two weeks ago."

The elbow injury cost Rios his No 1 position in the world rankings in April, and his next opponent, the South African

Wayne Ferreira, defeated him in his opening match on returning to the ATP Tour in Hamburg three weeks ago. "I think this is the nice thing about this sport, when you get a rematch," Rios said. "It's really exciting to play Ferreira again and try to beat him."

Courier, the champion in 1991 and 1992, was eliminated in the second round by Germany's Jens Knippschild, 6-4, 6-2, 6-3, and Australia's Mark Philippoussis was outlasted by the Czech Bohdan Uhlirach, 3-6, 6-7, 7-5, 6-4, 9-7.

Martina Hingis and Venus Williams, who are seeded to meet in the women's quarter-finals, advanced to the third round unbroken. It has been argued that a case for equal prize-money with the men might be made from the quarter-finals onward. Yesterday was "children's day" at Roland Garros and child's play for the two 17-year-olds. Hingis defeated Germany's Mischa Zabel, 6-1, 6-2, and Williams swept past Ai Sugiyama, of Japan, 6-0, 6-2, winning the first eight games.

## Lehmann leaves Durham gloomy

### Cricket

By Jon Cutley  
at Headington

**YORKSHIRE** 269-5; Durham 167  
Yorkshire win by 102 runs

**HAVING** made it to the last eight in the last year of the Benson and Hedges Cup, Durham's chance of reaching the semi-finals vanished in gloom and drizzle here yesterday. York-

shire's 50-over total – built around the Gold Award winner Darren Lehmann's forceful 119 – might never have been within the scope of a Durham side lacking the injured John Morris but their captain, David Boon, might nonetheless wonder why he turned down the opportunity at least to delay the inevitable.

The Tasmanian batsman, still in some discomfort after breaking a toe only two weeks

ago, was offered the chance to retreat to the dressing-rooms as what had been a sunny sky disappeared behind a blanket of grey. Durham at the time were 61 for 2 and the light was never to improve noticeably.

The decision to stay on did not look at all clever when his own departure precipitated a collapse in which the last seven Durham wickets fell for 79 in 15 overs on the pitch used for last Sunday's Texaco Trophy match. Simon Brown could not bat because of a knee injury that may need surgery.

Yorkshire's total concealed a horrendous start in which they lost two wickets for two runs in the opening two overs after Boon had put them in. Melvyn Betts delivered the first blow, inducing Alex McGrath to give a catch to Boon himself at first slip. Then Brown, playing his first competitive cricket of the season, had the Yorkshire skipper, David Byas, caught behind.

Boon later had to be helped from the field in pain but not before he had bowled his 10 overs unchanged for only 28 runs. Although Lehmann hit him for three fours in one over, he was the only Durham bowler Lehmann and Michael Vaughan, the only other first partnership, grew from barefoot beginnings to establish a county competition record for the third wicket.

Lehmann's accurate medium pace was no less easy to cope with, and there was a hint of panic even in the dismissals of Mark Ealham and Graham Cowdry. Without 55 extras, the second time this season Leicestershire have established a record for the competition, where would Kent have been?

The rest belonged to Maddy. He began by square-cutting Ben Phillips for six and ended by hitting him back over his head for three successive fours. At 28, it was Phillips' luck to miss him in the gully off Fleming. In the same over, Maddy lifted Fleming out of the ground and Kent's hearts must have sunk even more.

Lehmann, who cleverly picked the gaps in the field and hit the ball with increasing power as his confidence grew, reached 119 off 133 deliveries, hitting 13 fours before a brilliant catch behind the wicket denied him any more. For good measure, he took the last two Durham wickets to boot.

Fleming, who had been

sharp one of his bravura knocks better suited to flat pitches after Trevor Ward had gone. Unsurprisingly it was not long before he was caught off a skier. By then Robert Key had also gone, superbly caught one-handed by Ben Smith off a more authentic stroke, and when Alan Wells was leg before to a ball of full length there was no way back from 32 for 4 in these conditions.

Alan Mullally, moving the ball around from over and round the wicket, and James Ormond induced regular playing and missing; even Carl Hooper could not always locate the middle of the bat and remained in to make 60 from 102 balls before he was last out.

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### Brilliant Maddy brushes Kent aside

By Mike Carey  
of Leicestershire

**KENT** 158; Leicestershire 159-2  
Leicestershire win by eight wickets

**ON** a pitch that had been designer-made for their strong hand of seam bowlers, Leicestershire won an important toss and then outplayed Kent virtually from first ball to last to win their Benson and Hedges Cup quarter-final by eight wickets here yesterday.

Because of the conditions, excitement was in pretty short supply for much of the day, that is until Darren Maddy, with an unbeaten 93 from 129 balls, and Phil Simmons took their side home with 12 overs to spare with some powerful strokes.

Maddy was brilliant, in his footwork, technique and, more often than not, stroke execution, although he needed some luck on this pitch. At just 24 he is clearly a high class performer.

For poor Kent it was a cautionary day indeed, but there will be those north and south of the Medway who may query the toss being so influential in a game of this nature.

Kent, though, will look back and feel their approach against the seaming, bouncing ball left something to be desired, not least in their decision to send in Matthew Fleming in the fifth

over to try one of his bravura knocks better suited to flat pitches after Trevor Ward had gone. Unsurprisingly it was not long before he was caught off a skier. By then Robert Key had also gone, superbly caught one-handed by Ben Smith off a more authentic stroke, and when Alan Wells was leg before to a ball of full length there was no way back from 32 for 4 in these conditions.

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